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APHRODITE

The Story of the Little Pagan in the Park

By ROBERT W. CHAMBERS

AUTHOR OF IOLE

I

AT THE poet's third Franco-American Conference that afternoon the room was still vibrating with the echoes of Aphrodite's harp accompaniment to her own singing, and gushing approbation had scarcely ceased when the poet softly rose and stood with eyes half closed as though concentrating all the sweetness within him upon the surface of his pursed lips.

A wan young man whose face figured only as a by-product of his hair whispered "Hush!" and several people, who seemed to be more or less out of drawing, assumed attitudes which emphasized the faulty draftsmanship.

"La Poésie!" breathed the poet; "Kesker say la poésie?"

"La poésie—say la vee!" murmured a young woman with profuse teeth.

"Wee, wee, say la vee!" cried several people triumphantly.

"Nong!" sighed the poet, spraying the hushed air with sweetness—"Nong! Say pas la vee, say l'Immortalitay!"

After which the poet resumed his seat, and the by-product read, in French verse, "An Appreciation" of the works of Wilhelmina Gandertbury McNutt.

And that was the limit of the Franco portion of the Conference; the remainder being plain American.

Aphrodite, resting on her tall, gilded harp, looked sullenly straight before her. Somebody lighted a Chinese joss-stick, perhaps to kill the aroma of defunct cigarettes.

"Verse," said the poet, opening his heavy lids and gazing around him with the lambent eyed wonder of a newly-wakened ram—"Verse is a necklace of tinted sounds strung idly, yet lovingly, upon stray tinseled threads of thought. . . . Thank you for understanding; thank you."

The by-product in the corner of the studio gathered arms and legs into a series of acute angles, and writhed; a lady ornamented with cheekbones well sketched in covered her eyes with one hand as though locked in jiu-jitsu with Richard Strauss.

Aphrodite's slender fingers, barely resting on the harp-strings, suddenly contracted in a nervous tremor; a low twang echoed the involuntary reflex with a discord.

A young man, whose neck was swathed in a stock à la d'Orsay, bent close to her shoulder.

"I feel that our souls, blindfolded, are groping toward one another," he whispered.

"Don't—don't talk like that!" she breathed almost fiercely; "I am tired—suffocated with sound, drugged with joss-sticks and sandal. I can't stand much more, I warn you."

"Are you not well, beloved?"

"Perfectly well—physically. I don't know what it is—it has come so suddenly—this overwhelming revulsion—this exasperation with scents and sounds. . . . I could rip out these harp-strings and—and kick that chair over! I—I think I need something—sunlight and the wind blowing my hair loose——"

The young man with the stock nodded. "It is the exquisite pagan athirst in you, scorched by the fire of spring. Quench that sweet thirst at the fount beautiful——"

"What fount did you say?" she asked dangerously.

"The precious fount of verse, dear maid."

"No!" she whispered violently. "I'm half drowned already. Words, smells, sounds, attitudes, rocking-chairs—and candles profaning the sunshine—I am suffocated, I need more air, more sense and less incense—less art——"

"Less—*what?*" he gasped.

APHRODITE, RESTING ON HER TALL, GILDED HARP, LOOKED SULLENLY STRAIGHT BEFORE HER

"Less art!—what you call 'l'art'—yes, I've said it. I'm sick! sick of art! I know what I require now." And as he remained agape in shocked silence: "I don't mean to be rude, Mr. Frawley, but I also require less of you. . . . So much less that father will scarcely expect me to play any more accompaniments to your 'necklaces of precious tones'—so much less that the minimum of my interest in you vanishes to absolute negation. . . . So I shall not marry you."

"Aphrodite—are—are you mad?"

Her sulky, red mouth was mute.

Meanwhile the poet's rich, resonant voice filled the studio with an agreeable and rambling monotone:

"Verse is a vehicle for expression; expression is a vehicle for verse; sound, in itself, is so subtly saturated with meaning that it requires nothing of added logic for its vindication. Sound, therefore, *is* sense, modified by the mysterious portent of tone. Thank you for understanding, thank you for a thought—very, very precious, a thought beautiful."

He smeared the air with inverted thumb and smiled at Mr. Frawley, who rose, somewhat agitated, and, crooking one lank arm behind his back, made a mechanical pinch at an atmospheric atom.

"If—if you do that again—if you dare to recite those verses about me, I shall go! I tell you I can't stand any more," breathed Aphrodite between her clenched teeth.

The young man cast his large and rather sickly eyes upon her. For a moment he was in doubt, but belief in the witchery of sound prevailed, for he had yet to meet a being insensible to the "music of his soul," and so with a fond and fatuous murmur he pinched the martyred atmosphere once more, and began, mousily:

ALL

A year a year
My pale desire requires,
And that is all.
Enlacements weary, passion tires,
Kisses are cinder-ghosts of fires
Smothered at birth with mortal earth.
And that is all.

A year of fear
My pallid soul desires,
And that is all—
Terror of bliss and dread of happiness,
A subtle need of sorrow and distress
And you to weep one tear, no more, no less,
And that is all I ask—
And that is all.

People were breathing thickly; the poet unaffectedly distilled the suggested tear; it was a fat tear; it ran smoothly down his nose, twinkled, trembled and fell.

Aphrodite's features had become tense; she half rose, hesitated, mechanically feeling for her hat-pin. Then, as the young man in the stock turned his invalid's eyes in her direction and began:

Oh, sixteen tears
In sixteen years——

she transfixed her hat with one nervous gesture, sprang to her feet, turned, and vanished through the door.

"She is too young to endure it," sobbed the by-product to her of the sketchy face. And that was no idle epigram, either.

II

SHE had no definite idea; all she craved was the open—or its metropolitan substitute—sunshine, air, the glimpse of sanely preoccupied faces, the dull, quickening tumult of traffic. The tumult grew, increasing in her ears as she crossed Washington Square under the sycamores and looked up through tender feathery new foliage at the white arch of marble through which the noble avenue flows away, away between its splendid and chasms of marble, bronze and masonry to that blessed leafy oasis in the midst—the Park.

She took an omnibus, impatient for the green rambles of the only breathing place she knew of, and settled back in her seat, rebellious of eye, sullen of mouth, scarcely noticing the faintly amused expression of the young man opposite.

Two passengers left at Twenty-third Street, three at Thirty-fourth Street, and seven at Forty-second Street.

Preoccupied she glanced up at the only passenger remaining, caught the fleeting shadow of amusement on his face, regarded him with natural indifference, and looked out of the window, forgetting him. A few moments later, accidentally aware of him again, she carelessly noted his superficially attractive qualities, and, approving, resumed her idle inspection of the passing throng. But the next time her pretty head swung round she found him looking rather fixedly at her, and involuntarily she returned the gaze with a childlike directness—a gaze which he sustained to the limit of good breeding, then evaded so amiably that it left an impression perfectly agreeable.

"I don't see," thought Aphrodite, "why I never meet that sort of man. He hasn't art nouveau legs, and his features are

not by-products of his hair. . . . I have told my brothers-in-law that I am old enough to go out without coming out. . . . And I am."

The lovely mouth grew sullen again: "I don't wish to wait two years and be what dreadful people call a 'bud'! I wish to go to dinners and dances *now!* . . . Where I'll meet that sort of man. . . . The sort one feels almost at liberty to talk to without anybody presenting anybody. . . . I've a mind to look amiable the next time he——"

He *did*, at that instant; but she did not smile.

"I—I suppose that is the effect of civilization on me," she reflected—"metropolitan civilization. I felt like saying, 'For goodness' sake let's say something!'—even in spite of all my sisters have told me. I can't see why it would be dangerous for me to *look* amiable. If he glances at me again—so agreeably——"

He did; but she didn't smile.

"You see!" she said to herself discontentedly; "you don't dare look human. Why? Because you've had it so drummed into you that you can never, never again do anything natural. Why? Oh, because they all begin to talk about mysterious dangers when you say you wish to do anything attractive. . . . I've made up my mind to look amiable the next time he turns. . . . Why shouldn't he see that I'm quite willing to talk to him? . . . And I'm so tired of looking out of the window . . . Before I came to this curious city I was never afraid to speak to anybody who attracted me. . . . And I'm not now. . . . So if he does look at me——"

He did.

The faintest glimmer of a smile troubled her lips. She thought: "I *do* wish he'd speak!"

There was a very becoming color in his face, partly because he was experienced enough not to mistake her; partly from a sudden realization of her beauty.

"It's so odd," thought Aphrodite, "that attractive people consider it dangerous to speak to one another. I don't see any danger. . . . I wonder what he has in that square box beside him? It can't be a camera. . . . It *can't* be a folding easel! It simply *can't* be that *he* is an artist! a man like that——"

"*Are* you!" she asked quite involuntarily.

"What?" he replied astonished, wheeling around.

"An—an artist. I can't believe it, and I don't wish to! You don't look it, you know!"

For a moment he could scarcely realize that she had spoken; his keen brown eyes studied the face before him, the unembarrassed eyes, the oval contour, the smooth, flawless loveliness of a child.

"Yes, I am an artist," he said, considering her curiously.

"I am sorry," she said; "no, not sorry—only unpleasantly surprised. You see I am so tired of art—and I thought you looked so—so wholesome——"

He began to laugh—a modulated laugh—rather infectious, too, for Aphrodite bit her lip, then smiled, not exactly understanding it all.

"Why do you laugh?" she asked, still smiling. "Have I said something I should not have said?"

But he replied with a question: "Have you found art unwholesome?"

"I—I don't know," she answered with a little sigh; "I am so tired of it all. Don't let us talk about it—will you?"

"It isn't often I talk about it," he said, laughing again.

"Oh! That is unusual. Why don't you talk about art?"

"I'm much too busy."

"D—doing what? If that is not *very* impertinent."

"Oh, making pictures of things," he said, intensely amused.

"Pictures? You don't talk about art, and you paint pictures!"

"Yes."

"W—what kind? Do you mind my asking? You are so—so very unusual."

"Well, to earn my living, I make full-page pictures for magazines; to satisfy an absurd desire, I paint people—things—anything that might satisfy my color senses." He shrugged his shoulders gayly. "You see, I'm the sort you are so tired of——"

"But you *paint!* The artists I know don't paint—except *that* way——" She raised her pretty, gloved thumb and made a gesture in the air; and, before she had achieved it, they were both convulsed with laughter.

"You never do that, do you?" she asked at length.

"No, I never do. I can't afford to decorate the atmosphere for nothing!"

"Then—then you are not interested in art nouveau?"

"No; and I never could see that beautiful music resembled frozen architecture."

They were laughing again, looking with confidence and delight upon one another as though they had started life's journey together in that ancient omnibus.

"*What* is a 'necklace of precious tones'?" she asked.

"Precious stones?"

"No, *tones!*"

"I should say," he replied gravely, "that you should consult Henry Haynes." And they fell a-laughing so shamelessly

"LA POESIE—SAY LA VEE!" MURMURED A YOUNG WOMAN WITH PROFUSE TEETH

that the 'bus driver turned and squinted through his shutter at them, and the scandalized horses stopped of their own accord.

"Are you going to get out?" he asked as she rose.

"Yes; this is the Park," she said. "Thank you, and good-by."

He held the door for her; she nodded her thanks and descended, turning frankly to smile again in acknowledgment of his quickly lifted hat.

"He *was* nice," she reflected a trifle guiltily, "and I had a good time, and I really don't see any danger in it."

She drew a deep, sweet breath as she entered the leafy shade and looked up into the bluest of cloudless skies. Odors of syringa and lilac freshened her, cleansing her of the last lingering taint of joss-sticks. The cardinal birds were very busy in the scarlet masses of Japanese quince; orioles fluttered among golden Forsythia; here and there an exotic starling preened and peered at the burnished purple grackle, stalking solemnly through the tender grass.

For an hour she walked vigorously, enchanted with the sun and sky and living green, through arbors heavy with wistaria, iris hued and scented, through rambles under tall elms tufted with new leaves, past fountains splashing over, past lakes where waterfowl floated or stretched brilliant wings in the late afternoon sunlight. At times the summer wind blew her hair, and she stretched her lips to it, caressing it with every fibre of her; at times she walked pensively, wondering why she had been forbidden the Park unless accompanied.

"More danger, I suppose," she thought impatiently. . . . "Well, *what* is this danger that seems to travel like one's shadow, dogging a girl through the world? It seems to me that if all the pleasant things of life are so full of danger I'd better find out what it is. . . . I might as well look for it so that I'll recognize it when I encounter it. . . . And learn to keep away."

She scanned the flowery thickets attentively, looked behind her, then walked on.

"If it's robbers they mean," she reflected, "I'm a good wrestler, and I can make any one of my four brothers-in-law look foolish. . . . Besides, the Park is full of fat policemen. . . . And if they mean I'm likely to get lost, or run over, or arrested, or poisoned with soda-water and bonbons——" She laughed to herself, swinging on in her free-limbed, wholesome beauty, scarcely noticing a man ahead, occupying a bench half hidden under the maple's foliage.

"So I'll just look about for this danger they are all afraid of, and when I see it I'll know what to do," she concluded, paying not the slightest heed to the man on the bench until he rose, as she passed him, and took off his hat.

"You?" she exclaimed.

She had stopped short, confronting him with the fearless and charming directness natural to her. "What an amusing accident," she said frankly.

"The truth is," he began, "it is not exactly an accident."

"Isn't it?"

"N—no. . . . Are you offended?"

"Offended? No. Should I be? Why? . . . Besides, I suppose you are going the *other* way."

"I—no, I wasn't."

"Oh. Then you are going to sit here?"

"Y—yes—I suppose so. . . . But I don't want to."

"Then why do you?"

"Well, if I'm not going the *other* way, and if I'm not going to remain here——" He looked at her, half laughing. She laughed, too, not exactly knowing why. "Don't you really mind my walking a little way with you?" he asked.

"No, I don't. Why should I? Is there any reason? Am I not old enough to know why we should not walk together? Is it because the sun is going down? *Is* there what people call 'danger'?"

He was so plainly taken aback that her fair young face became seriously curious.

"*Is* there?" she persisted.

The clear, direct gaze challenged him. He hesitated.

"Yes, there is," he said.

"A—a reason why you should not walk with me?"

"Yes."

"What is it?"

And, as he did not find words to answer, she studied him for a moment, glanced up and down the woodland walk, then impulsively seated herself and motioned him to a place beside her on the bench.

"Now," she said, "I'm in a position to find out just what this danger is that they all warn me about. *You* know, don't you?"

"Know what?" he answered.

"About the danger that I seem to run every time I manage to be enjoying myself. . . . And you *do* know; I see it by the way you look at me—and your expression is just like their expression when they tell me not to do the things I find most natural."

"But—I—you——"

"You *must* tell me! I shall be thoroughly vexed with you if you don't."

Then he began to laugh, and she let him, leaning back to watch him with uncertain and speculative blue eyes. After a moment he said:

"You are absolutely unlike any girl I ever heard of. I am trying to get used to it all—to adjust things. Will you help me?"

"How?" she asked innocently.

"Well, by telling me"—he looked at her a moment—"your age. You look about nineteen."

"I am sixteen and a half. I and all my sisters have developed our bodies so perfectly because, until we came to New York last autumn, we had lived all our lives out-of-doors." She looked at him with a friendly smile. "Would you really like to know about me?"

"Intensely."

"Well, there are eight of us: Chlorippe, thirteen; Philodice, fourteen; Dione, fifteen; Aphrodite, sixteen—I am Aphrodite; Cybele, seventeen, married; Lissa, eighteen, married; Iole, nineteen, married, and Vanessa, twenty, married." She raised one small, gloved finger to emphasize the narrative. "All our lives we were brought up to be perfectly natural, to live, act, eat, sleep, play like primitive people. Our father dressed us like youths—boys, you know—in nothing but sandals and pajamas. Why," she said earnestly, "until we came to New York we had no idea that girls wore such lovely, fluffy underwear—but I believe I am not to mention such things; at least, they have told me not to—but my straight front is still a novelty to me, and so are my stockings, so you won't mind if I've said something I shouldn't, will you?"

"No," he said; his face was expressionless.

"Then *that's* all right. So you see how it is; we don't quite know what we may do in this city. At first we were delighted to see so many attractive men, and we wanted to speak to some of them who seemed to want to speak to us, but my father put a stop to that—but it's absurd to think all those men might be robbers, isn't it?"

"Very." There was not an atom of intelligence left in his face.

"So *that's* all right, then. Let me see, what was I saying? Oh, yes, I know! So four of my sisters were married, and we four remaining are being civilized. . . . But oh—I wish I could be in the country for a little while! I'm so homesick for the meadows and brooks, and my pajamas, and my bare feet in sandals again. . . . And people seem to know so little in New York, and nobody understands us when we make little jests in Greek, or Latin, or Arabic, and nobody seems to have been very well-educated and accomplished, so we feel strange at times."

"D—d—do you *do* all those things?"

"What things?"

"M—make jests in Arabic?"

"Why, yes. Don't you?"

"No. What else do you do?"

"Why, not many things."

"Music?"

"Oh, of course."

"Piano?"

"Yes, piano, violin, harp, guitar, zither—all that sort of thing. . . . Don't you?"

"No. What else?"

"Why—just various things—ride, swim, fence, box—I box pretty well—all those things——"

"Science, too?"

"Rudiments. Of course, I couldn't, for example, discourse with authority upon the Heteropterous Mictidæ or tell you in

what genus or genera the prothorax and femora are digitate; or whether climatic and polymorphic forms of certain diurnal lepidoptera occur within certain boreal limits. I have only a vague and superficial knowledge of any science, you see."

"I see," he said gravely.

She leaned forward thoughtfully, her pretty hands loosely interlaced upon her knee.

"Now," she said, "tell me about this danger that such a girl as I must guard against."

"There is no danger," he said slowly.

"But they told me ——"

"Let them tell you what it is, then."

"No; you tell me."

"I can't."

"Why?"

"Because—I simply can't."

"Are you ashamed to?"

"Perhaps ——" He lifted his boxed sketching kit by the strap, swung it, then set it carefully upon the ground: "Perhaps it is because I am ashamed to admit that there could be any danger to any woman in this world of men."

She looked at him so seriously that he straightened up and began to laugh. But she did not forget anything he had said, and she began her questions at once:

"Why should you not walk with me?"

"I'll take that back," he said, still laughing; "there is every reason why I should walk with you."

"Oh! . . . But you said ——"

"All I meant was not for you, but for the ordinary sort of girl. Now, the ordinary, every-day, garden girl does not concern you ——"

"Yes, she does! Why am I not like her?"

"Don't attempt to be ——"

"*Am* I different—very different?"

"Superbly different!" The flush came to his face with the impulsive words.

She considered him in silence, then: "Should I have been offended because you came into the Park to find me? And why did you? Do you find me interesting?"

"So interesting," he said, "that I don't know what I shall do when you go away."

Another pause; she was deeply absorbed with her own thoughts. He watched her, the color still in his face, and in his eyes a growing fascination.

"I'm not out," she said, resting her chin on one gloved hand, "so we're not likely to meet at any of those jolly things you go to. What do you think we'd better do?—because they've all warned me against doing just what you and I have done."

"Speaking without knowing each other?" he asked guiltily.

"Yes . . . But I did it first to you. Still, when I tell them about it, they won't let you come to visit me. I tried it once. I was in a car, and such an attractive man looked at me as though he wanted to speak, and so when I got out of the car he got out, and I thought he seemed rather timid, so I asked him where Tiffany's was. I really didn't know, either. So we had such a jolly walk together up Fifth Avenue, and when I said good-by he was so anxious to see me again, and I told him where I lived. But—do you know?—when I explained about it at home they acted so strangely, and they never would tell me whether or not he ever came."

"Then you intend to tell them all about—*us?*"

"Of course. I've disobeyed them."

"And—and I am never to see you again?"

"Oh, I'm very disobedient," she said innocently. "If I wanted to see you I'd do it."

"But *do* you?"

"I—I am not sure. Do you want to see me?"

His answer was stammered and almost incoherent. That, and the color in his face and the *something* in his eyes, interested her.

"Do you really find me so attractive?" she asked, looking him directly in the eyes. "You must answer me quickly; see how dark it is growing! I must go. Tell me, do you like me?"

"I never cared so much for—for any woman ——"

She dimpled with delight and lay back regarding him under level, unembarrassed brows.

"That is very pleasant," she said. "I've often wished that a man—of your kind—would say that to me. I do wish we could be together a great deal, because you like me so much already and I truly do find you agreeable. . . . Say it to me again—about how much you like me."

"I—I—there is no woman like you—none I ever saw so—so interesting. . . . I mean more than that."

"Say it then."

"Say what I mean?"

"Yes."

"I am afraid."

"Afraid? Of what?"

"Of offending you ——"

"Is it an offense to me to tell me how much you like me? *How* can it offend me?"

"But—it is incredible! You won't believe ——"

"Believe what?"

"That in so short a time I—I could care for you so much ——"

"But I shall believe you. I know how I feel toward you. And every time you speak to me I feel more so."

"Feel more so?" he stammered.

"Yes, I experience more delight in what you say. Do you think I am insensible to the way you look at me? As though you were offering me the world? . . . Give it to me!"

"You—you mean ——" he simply could not find words.

She leaned back, watching him with sweet composure; then laughed a little and said: "Do you suppose that you and I are going to fall in love with one another?"

In the purpling dusk the perfume of wistaria grew sweeter and sweeter.

"I've done it already ——" His voice shook and failed; a thrush, invisible in shadowy depths, made soft, low sounds.

SCARCELY NOTICING THE FAINTLY AMUSED EXPRESSION OF THE YOUNG MAN OPPOSITE

"You *love* me—already?" she exclaimed under her breath.

"Love you! I—I—there are no words ——" The thrush stirred the sprayed foliage and called once, then again, restless for the moon.

Her eyes wandered over him thoughtfully: "So *that* is love. . . . I didn't know. . . . I supposed it could be nothing pleasanter than friendship, although they say it is. . . . But how could it be? There is nothing pleasanter than friendship. . . . I am perfectly delighted that you love me. Shall we marry some day, do you think?"

He strove to speak, but her frankness stunned him.

"I meant to tell you that I am engaged," she observed. "Does that matter?"

"Engaged!" He found his tongue quickly enough then; and she, surprised, interested, and in nowise dissenting, listened to his eloquent views upon the matter of Mr. Frawley, whom she, during the lucid intervals of his silence, curtly described.

"Do you know," she said with great relief, "that I always felt that way about love, because I never knew anything about it except from the symptoms of Mr. Frawley? So when they told me that love and friendship were different, I supposed it must be so, and I had no very high opinion of love . . . until you made it so agreeable. Now I—I prefer it to anything else. . . . I could sit here with you all day, listening to you. Tell me some more."

He did. She listened, sometimes intently interested, absorbed, sometimes leaning back dreamily, her sweet eyes partly veiled under silken lashes, her mouth curved with the faintest of smiles.

He spoke as a man who awakes with a start—not very clearly at first, then with feverish coherence, at times with recklessness almost eloquent. Still only half awakened himself, still scarcely convinced, scarcely credulous that this miracle of an hour had been wrought in him, here under the sky and sun and new-born leaves, he spoke not only to her but of her to himself, formulating in words the rhythm his pulses were beating, interpreting this surging tide which thundered in his heart, clamoring out the fact—the fact—the fact that he loved!—that love was on him like the grip of Fate—on him so suddenly, so surely, so inexorably, that, stricken as he was, the clutch only amazed and numbed him.

He spoke, striving to teach himself that the incredible was credible, the impossible possible—that it was done! done! done! and that he loved a woman in an hour because, in an hour, he had read her innocence as one reads through crystal, and his eyes were opened for the first time upon loveliness unspoiled, sweetness untainted, truth uncompromised.

"Do you know," she said, "that, as you speak, you make me care for you so much more than I supposed a girl could care for a man?"

"Can you love me?"

"Oh, I do already! I don't mean mere love. It is something—*something* that I never knew about before. *Everything* about you is so—so exactly what I care for—your voice, your head, the way you think, the way you look at me. I never thought of men as I am thinking about you. . . . I want you to belong to me—all alone. . . . I want to see how you look when you are angry, or worried, or tired. I want you to think of me when you are perplexed and unhappy and ill. Will you? You *must!* There is nobody else, is there? If you do truly love me?"

"Nobody but you."

"That is what I desire. . . . I want to live with you—I promise I won't talk about art—even *your* art, which I might learn to care for. All I want is to really live and have your troubles to meet and overcome them because I will not permit anything to harm you. . . . I will love you enough for that. . . . I—do you love other women?"

"Good God, no!"

"And you shall not!" She leaned closer, looking him through and through. "I *will* be what you love! I *will* be what you desire most in all the world. I will be to you everything you wish, in every way, always, ever, and forever and ever. . . . Will you marry me?"

"Will *you?*"

"Yes."

She suddenly stripped off her glove, wrenched a ring set with brilliants from the third finger of her left hand, and, rising, threw it straight as a young boy throws far out into deepening twilight. It was the end of Mr. Frawley; he, too, had not only become a by-product but a good-by product. Yet his modest demands had merely required a tear a year! Perhaps he had not asked enough. Love pardons the selfish.

She was laughing, a trifle excited, as she turned to face him where he had risen. But, at the touch of his hand on hers, the laughter died at a breath, and she stood, her limp hand clasped in his, silent, expressionless, save for the tremor of her mouth.

"I—I must go," she said, shrinking from him.

He did not understand, thrilled, stunned as he was by the contact, but he let her soft hand fall away from his.

Then with a half sob she caught her own fingers to her lips and kissed them where the pressure of his hand turned her white flesh—kissed them, looking at him.

"You—you find a child—you leave a woman," she said unsteadily. "Do you understand how I love you—for that?"

He caught her in his arms.

"No—not yet—not my mouth!" she pleaded, holding him back; "I love you too much—already *too* much. Wait! Oh, *will* you wait? . . . And let me wait—*make* me wait? . . . I—I begin to understand . . . some things . . . I did not know an hour ago."

In the dusk he could scarcely see her as she swayed, yielding, her arms tightening about his neck in the first kiss she had ever given or forgiven in all her life.

And through the swimming tumult of their senses the thrush's song rang like a cry. The moon had risen.

. . . . . .

Mounting the deadened stairway noiselessly to her sister's room, groping for the door in the dark of the landing, she called: "Isle!" And again: "Isle! Come to me! It is I!"

The door swung noiselessly; a dim form stole forward, wide-eyed and white in the electric light.

Then down at her sister's feet dropped Aphrodite, and laid a burning face against her silken knees. And, "Oh, Isle,

(Concluded on Page 27)

TALES OF THE ROAD

By CHARLES N. CREWDSON

Getting a Merchant's Attention

"GETTING a merchant's attention," said the furnishing-goods man, "is the main thing. You may get a man to answer your questions in a sort of a way, but you really do not always have his attention when he talks to you. You had better not call on a man at all than go at him in a listless manner. This is where the old-timer has the bulge over the new man.

"I once knew a man, who had been a successful clerk for many years, who started on the road with a line of trousers. He had worked for one of my old customers. I chanced to meet him when I was starting on my trip, at the very time when he was making his first attempt at selling a bill to the man for whom he had formerly been working. Of course, this was a push-over for him, because his old employer gave him an order as a compliment.

"Well, sir, when that fellow learned that I was going West—this was on the Northern Pacific—he hung right on to me and said he would like to go along. Of course, I told him I should be very glad to have him do so, and that I would do for him whatever I could. But here he made a mistake. When a man starts out on the road he must paddle his own canoe. It is about as much as his friend can do to sell his own line of goods, much less to put in a boost for somebody else. And, furthermore, a man who takes a young chick under his wing will often cut off some of his own feed. Still, this fellow had always been very friendly with me, and I said, 'Why, to be sure, Henry; come right along with me.'

"In the second and third towns that we made he picked up a couple of small bills that just about paid his expenses. He was just beginning to find that the road was not such an easy path to travel as, in his own mind, he had fancied it to be.

"The next town we struck was Bismarck, North Dakota. We got in there about three o'clock in the morning. It was Thanksgiving Day. To be sure, I went to bed and had a good sleep. A man must always feel fresh, you know, if he expects to do any work.

"It was about eleven o'clock before I breakfasted, opened up, and started across the street. My old customer had burned out there, and I, too, had to go out and rustle some man. Just as I started over toward town I met my German friend Henry coming back. His face looked like a full moon shining through a cloud. I could see that there was trouble on his mind.

"'Well, Henry, how goes it?' said I.

"'Id don't go so goot,' said he. 'But vat can a man expect on Danksgifing? I vent to see von man and he said: "I haf an olt house dat always dreats me right, so vat's de use of chanching?" Vell, vat archument could I make against dot? I vent in to see anodder man and he said: "I haf an olt friend dot I buy from"—and vat archument could I make against dot? I vent in to see still anodder, and he said: "I haf just bought"—so vat archument could I make against dot? The next man I vent to see said: "Vy, man, don'd you suppose I am going to rest von day in de year?" So I t'ought dere vas no use fooling mit him.'

"'All right, Henry,' said I; 'but I guess I'll go over and try my luck.'

"The first man that I went to see was the one who had said to my friend Henry that he thought he ought to have one day in the year to rest. He was the biggest merchant in the town. When I reached his store he was putting the key in the door to lock up and go home for dinner.

"I couldn't talk to him out there in the cold—we were strangers—so I said to him: 'I should like to buy a couple of collars, if you please.' He sold me the collars and then, just for a bluff, I made out that mine was hurting me and took a few minutes to put on another one. I didn't say anything about what my business was, and the merchant, in order to have something to say, asked: 'Are you a stranger in town?'

"'Yes, sir,' said I, 'I am. But I hope that I shall not be very much longer. I am out looking for a location.'

"'You are a physician, then?' said the merchant.

"'Yes, sir—in a way,' said I; 'but I treat diseases in rather a peculiar way, I fancy. I believe in going down to the cause of diseases and treating the cause rather than the disease itself. My specialty is the eye. Now, you see, if the eye looks at bright, sparkling snow it is strained, but if it looks at a green pasture that color rests it. In fact, if the eye looks upon anything that is not pleasing to it, it does it an injury. Now, my way of getting down to the root of all this eye trouble is to place before it things that are pleasing to look upon, and in this way make eye-salves and things of that kind unnecessary. In just a word,' said I (I had his attention completely), 'I am selling the prettiest, most up-to-date line of furnishing goods there is on the road. They are so attractive that they are good for sore eyes. Now, the only way I can back up this statement is by showing you what I have. When will it suit you to look at them? The location that I am looking for is a location for my goods right here on your shelves.'

"Well, sir, that merchant really came down to my sample-room on Thanksgiving Day—he hardly took time to eat his dinner—and I sold him.

"I didn't see any more of my friend Henry until the next morning. The train was late and left about seven o'clock.

"'Vell, what luck yesterday?' said Henry, as he came up to me in the train where I was sitting with a friend. I said: 'Well, I sold a bill.'

"'Who bought of you?'

"'The clothing man here.'

"'Vell, dot's de fel'er,' said Henry, 'dot told me 'e vas going to haf von day in de year for his family. And you solt him? Vell, how did you do id?'

"I briefly told Henry of my experience.

"'Vell, dot vas goot,' said he.

"My advance-agent friend, who had sat beside me—Henry had fallen in with us in our double seat—said to Henry: 'Now, that's a good line of argument. Why don't you use that sometime?' A twinkle came into my theatrical friend's eye when Henry did, in fact, ask my permission to use this line of talk. I told Henry: 'Why, sure, go on and use that argument anywhere you want to. I shall not use it again, because in every town that I shall strike, from this time on, I have an old-established customer. I have no use for that argument. Just go and use it.'

"'You'd better write that down with a pencil, Henry,' said the agent—Stanley was his name.

"'No, dere's no use of writing dot down,' said Henry. 'Dot archument vas so clear dot I haf it in my headt.'

"But, sure enough, Henry took out his lead pencil and jotted down the points in the back of his order-book. In the next town we struck one of the merchants was a gruff old Tartar. He was the first man that Henry lit on to.

"Now, an old merchant can size up a traveling man very soon after he enters the door. The shoe man will go over to where the shoes are kept; the hat man will turn his face toward the hat-case; the furnishing-goods man will size up the display of neckwear: in fact, a merchant once told me that he could even tell the difference between a clothing man and a pants man. A clothing man will walk up to a table and run his hands over the coats, while the other sort will always finger the pants to a suit.

"Well, sir, when Henry walked into this gruff old merchant's store he found him busy waiting on a customer, so up he marched to a clothing-table and began to feel of a pile of pants.

"After the customer went out he went up to the old man and said to him: 'Goot-morning, sir. I am a physician, sir, and I am looking for a logation——'

"'You are no such a d——d thing,' said the old man. 'You are selling pants!'

"Henry told me of this experience when he came back to the hotel, and he was so broken-hearted that he almost felt like going back home. In fact, he didn't last more than about three weeks. He had started too late in life to learn the arts of the traveling man."

"Yes," said the wall-paper man, who had heard this story, "attention is the whole thing. I know I once tried my hardest to get hold of an old Irishman down in Texas. He was a jolly old chap, but I couldn't get next. There wasn't any sample-room in the town, and if I showed my goods to any one I would have to get his consent to let me bring my stuff into his store. When I struck old Murphy to let me bring my goods in he gave me a stand-off so hard that another one of the boys who was in the store gave me the laugh. This riled me a little, and I said to my friend who thought he had the joke on me: 'I am going to sell that old duck just the same.' 'I'll bet a new hat you don't,' said he. Something flashed across me, somehow or other. I got bold and I said: 'I'll just take that bet.'

"I had to wait in town, anyway, for several hours, so that I couldn't get out until after supper. So I went up to the hotel for dinner. That afternoon I went back to Murphy's store, pulled out a cigar-case and, passing it over to the old gentleman, said: 'Take one, neighbor. These are out of my private box.' It was really a good cigar, and the old man, giving me a little blarney, said: 'Shure, that cigar is a birrd!' 'I'm glad you like it,' said I. 'I have those sent me from Chicago, a fresh box every week. If you like it so well, here, take a couple more. I have lots of them in my grip.' I laid a couple on the old man's desk, and he didn't object.

"'Now, Mr. Murphy,' said I, 'I know you don't wish to look at any of my goods whatsoever, and I'm not the man to ask you a second time. In fact, I am really glad you don't wish to buy some goods from me, because it gives me a chance to run through my samples. I've been aiming to do some work on them for several days, but really haven't had the time—I've been so busy. But there's nobody else here in the town that I care to see.' (A mild dose of 'smoosh,' given at the right time and in the right way, never does any harm, you know.) 'And as there's no sample-room here, I'm sure you'll allow me to have my trunk thrown in your store where I shall not be in your way. I wish to rid myself of "outs."'

"'Shure, me b'y; shure, me b'y,' said the old man. 'Toike all the room you will, but ye know Oi'm not for lookin' at your goods. Oi'm waitin' for a frind, ye know.'

"'Very well, thank you; I promise you faithfully, Mr. Murphy, that I'll not show you any goods. I merely wish to get rid of my "tear-outs" and straighten up my line.'

"When the drayman dumped my trunk into the back end of the store I opened up on the counter and tore off several 'outs.' I let my samples lie there and went up the street, but came back several times and peeped into the front window to see what the old man was doing. I did this three or four times, and finally I saw him and one of the clerks back where my samples were, fingering them over.

"'SHURE, THAT CIGAR IS A BIRRD!'"

Editor's Note—This is one of a series of articles by Mr. Crewdson, each complete in itself, but all dealing with the work of the traveling salesman. The next will appear in an early number.

"Then I went around to the back door, which was near where my samples were, marched right in and caught the old man in the act."

"Sell him?" spoke up one of the boys.

"Sure," said the wall-paper man, "and I made the man who had lost the hat come down and buy one for me from the old Irishman."

"Well, that was a clever sale," said the hat man, "but you have, you know, as much trouble sometimes holding an old customer in line as you do in selling a new one. For my own part, whenever a customer gets clear off the hook I let him swim. You have a great deal better luck casting your fly for new fish than you do in throwing your bait for one that has got away from you. My rule is, when a man is gone let him go! But as long as I have him on the hook I am going to play him.

"When I was down in New Orleans a few seasons ago one of my old customers said: 'Look here, I don't see any use of buying goods from you. I can buy them right home just as cheaply as you sell them to me, and save the freight. This freight item amounts to a good deal in the course of a year. See, here is a stiff hat that I buy for twenty-four dollars a dozen that is just as good as the one that you are selling me for the same money. Look at it.' He passed it over to me. I rubbed my hand over the crown and quickly I rapped the derby over my fist, knocking the crown clean off it. I threw the rim on to the floor and didn't say a word. This play cost me a new hat, but it was the best way I could answer my customer's argument. After that my customer was as gentle as a dove. He afterward admitted that he liked my goods better, but that he was trying to work me for the difference in freight."

"The clerk can always give you a good many straight tips," spoke up one of the boys.

"Yes, and you bet your life he does his best to queer you once in a while, too!" said the clothing man. "I know I had a tough tussle with one not a great while ago down in Pittsburg. Last season I placed a small bunch of stuff in a big store there. I had been late in getting around, but the merchant liked my samples and told me that, if the goods delivered turned out all right, he would give me good business this season.

"Now my house delivers right up to sample. A great many houses do not, and so merchants judge, not the samples they look at, but the goods delivered to them. It is the house that *delivers* good merchandise that holds its business, not the one that shows bright samples and ships poor stuff.

"I went up to my man's store—this was just a few weeks ago—and asked him to come over with me.

"'My head clothing man,' said my customer, 'does not like your stuff. I might as well be frank with you about it.' 'What objection has he to it?' said I. 'He says they don't fit. He says the trimmings and everything are all right; and I wish they did fit, because your prices look cheap to me.' 'Well, let's go over and see about that,' said I. 'There's no one in the world more willing and anxious to make things right than I am if there is anything wrong.'

"I didn't know just what I had to go up against. The man on the road gets all the kicks. Once in a while there is a clerk who puts out his hand like the boy who waits on you at table, and if pretty good coin is not dropped in it, or some favor shown him, he will have it in for you.

"My customer and I walked over to where the clerk was, and I came right out and said: 'Johnnie, what's the matter with this clothing you've received from me? Mr. Green (the merchant) here tells me you say it doesn't fit. Let's see about that.' The clerk was slim and stoop-shouldered. The tailor to his Royal Highness could not have made a coat hang right on him. 'Now, you are kicking so much, Johnnie, on my clothing, you go here in this store and pick out some coats your size from other people and let's see how they fit. Let's put this thing to a fair test.'

"'That's square,' said Green. 'If a thing is so, I want to know it; if it isn't, I want to know it.'

"I slipped on to Johnnie three or four of my competitors' coats that he brought, and they hung upon him about as well as they would on a scarecrow.

"'Now, Johnnie, you are a good boy,' said I, 'but you've been inside so long that the Lord, kind as He is, hasn't built you just right. You are not the man who is to wear this clothing that comes into the store. It is the other fellow. My house does not make clothing for people who are not built right. We take the perfect man as our pattern and build to suit him. Now, you just simply go, Johnnie, and get me ten coats. I sold you ten numbers—I remember exactly—one hundred and twenty suits—one from every line that you bought, and I want to show you that there isn't a bad fitter in the whole lot.'

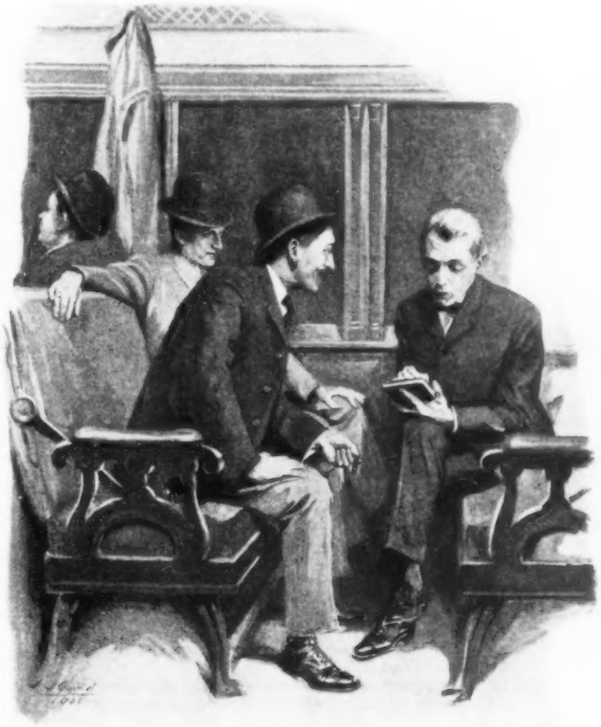
"The clerk started to dig out my size, but he couldn't find a thirty-eight in but three lots to save his life. I put these on and they fitted to a 'T.' I looked in the mirror myself and could see that the fit was perfect.

"'Now, look here, Brother Green,' said I, 'what are you in business for? You are in business to buy the best stuff that you can for your money. Now you remember you thought when you bought my goods that they were from one to two dollars a suit cheaper and just as good as anything you had seen. Now if you can buy something from me just as good as another man can give you, and buy it cheaper, you are going to do it, aren't you?'

"'Why, to be sure, Jim,' said Green, warming up.

"'Now, look here, it isn't the opinion of your clerk, or your own opinion, even, that you care a rap for. The opinion that is worth something is that of the man who buys his goods from you. Now you see very plainly that my stuff is good. Thirty-eight is a size of which you bought many, and you have that size left in but three lines out of ten. Here you see very plainly that my goods have moved faster than any other clothing you have bought this season; and, as far as the fit is concerned, you see full well that other stuff didn't fit Johnnie because he isn't built right. You did see—and you do see—I have one of them on right now—that my clothing fits a well-built man.'

"I saw that I had the old man on my side, and I knew that Johnnie had dropped several points in his estimation. The truth of the matter was the clerk was knocking on me in favor of one of his old friends. Of course, I wouldn't come right out and say this, but the old man himself grew wise on this point, because that afternoon he came down by himself and bought from me a good, fat bill. The clerk simply killed himself by not being fair with me. No clerk who expects promotion can afford to play favorites."



"HENRY TOOK OUT HIS LEAD PENCIL AND JOTTED DOWN THE POINTS"

BY TWO AND TWO

By CHARLES EUGENE BANKS

Mount, comrade! stirrup to stirrup; firm seat and a deep-drawn breath;
It is you and I and the misty trail through the low-hung hills of death,
It is you and I and the soft white light that is born of the soul's embrace,
Together we'll ride, whatever betide, till we see God face to face.

Let the loveless pray for a self-sure way, and the coward cringe and fawn,
By the stars that light the brow of night together we'll come to the dawn.
By the true and fair and the love we share, by the hilts of our sabres keen,
Close side by side to the end we'll ride, and nothing shall come between.
From the low, sad moan of the woods wind-blown, o'er the sand-gray, bone-starred plain,
With an answering shout to the thunder's rout, and a face to the pelting rain;
With a bugle-blast for the pleasures past, and a song for the joy that's here;
With a naked blade for the creeds man-made, and a glove for the cheek of Fear;
To the uttermost end of things we send our challenge free and bold,
And side by side together we'll ride, whatever the tale is told.

Taut rein, spur deep. In the tangled steep the panther's eyeballs glare,
But the carbine rings and the dull lead sings at the roots of the tawny hair.
Through the languorous breeze where the cypress knees in the dank lagoons show grim,
Where the 'possum clings and the mock-bird sings in the poplar white and slim;
Down snow-clad slopes where the gray-wolf lopes in the van of his snarling pack;
We two alone as the winds are blown ride on o'er the unknown track.
By two and two, if the creeds be true, shall never the race be run;
Or be it to dwell in Heaven or Hell, but always by one and one;
Yet on, to the beat of the steel-shod feet, bare-browed to the heat or cold,
Still side by side together we'll ride, whatever the tale is told.

By one and one must the race be run? Ride on by my side, true heart,
Till we find the King that the sagas sing—for never we two will part
Till face to face in the innermost place of creation's heart we stand,
With the King of Kings in the Heart of Things, where the birth of the world was planned.
By the well-tried worth of saddle and girth, by stirrup and spur and rein,
By the loyal pride of the steeds we ride, by the heart of the panther slain,
By the eye of Mars and the mated stars we knew ere the race began;
By the blind bat's flight through the inky night, by the measureless height of Man;
By the vital spark that defies the dark, and the waves of the river cold,
On, side by side to the end we'll ride, whatever the tale is told.

By the life we bear, and the love we share, and the breath of the Great Soul's breath,
It is you and I and the misty trail through the low-hung hills of death,
It is you and I and the soft white light that is born of the soul's embrace;
Together we'll ride, whatever betide, till we see God face to face.

The Sunday-School Picnic

As You and Hen Knew It in the Brave Days of Old

By EDWIN L. SABIN

THE MINISTER GOES TO SLEEP WITH A HANDKERCHIEF ON HIS FACE

'TWAS the day of the picnic—the Baptist picnic. You yourself were not, by family persuasion, a member of that denomination, but the Schmidts, next door, were, and by the grace of Hen, your crony, you were enabled to gain admittance, upon occasion, into the Baptist 'bus.

The 'bus was not scandalized. You had been in it before, as Methodist, Congregationalist, Unitarian—what not. So had Hen. Only a few little girls were shocked, and gazed at you disdainfully.

"*You* ain't a Baptist!" they accused.

"Neither's Blanche Davis!" you retorted, carrying the debate into the enemy's country. "I guess I've got as much right here as she has!"

"I came with Lucy Barrett," informed Blanche primly.

"An' I come with Hen Schmidt. His father's a deacon, too!" you asserted.

"Oh, he ain't—is he, Mr. Jones? He ain't—is he?" appealed the little girls shrilly.

Mr. Jones, beaming with long-suffering, Sunday-school-superintendent good humor, obligingly halted.

"Henry Schmidt's father ain't a deacon, is he?"

"Yes, I believe so," affirmed Mr. Jones pleasantly.

Thus you valiantly maintained your position—and Hen's.

When you and Hen had pantingly arrived at the rendezvous you had found yourselves in the midst of baskets and bustle. The baskets gave forth fascinating, mysterious clinks. In your individual capacity of guest you had brought no basket of your own, but you had helped Hen carry down the Schmidt contribution, and you knew of what it spake and smelled, and you had peeked in under the cover. Besides, Hen had told you, in detail.

Clad in necessarily stout shoes but quite superfluously clean waists, you and he, with the basket between, had hastened to the place of assembly.

Other boys appeared. Poor indeed was that wight who could not take up a Baptist friend—particularly if his own church gave picnics. Therefore, behold, as at the millennium, the creeds of your world united to-day under one flag—which happened to be the Baptist.

Snoopie Mitchell, of course, was there. Snoopie usually went fishing or skating on Sunday; but at picnic-time and Christmas even he did not deny the comforts of the church.

"Hello!" you said.

"GEE—I DRUNK FIFTEEN!"

"Hello!" said Snoopie nonchalantly. "Aw, you kids are too late!"

Snoopie never was too late. He had the instincts of the ranging shark, and, moreover, perfect freedom to obey them.

"Why?" demanded you and Hen breathlessly.

"They took it away. Gee! Two freezers bigger'n me!"

"More'n the Methodists had?" you inquired eagerly.

"You bet!" affirmed Snoopie.

You sighed—a happy, satisfied sigh.

The passenger 'buses arrived, two of them. They were greeted with a cheer, and scarcely had the gaunt, rusty, white horses of the foremost one swung about to back ere into it you all scrambled.

You and Hen promptly plumped down at the end—end seats and the seat with the driver being the choice ones.

"Children! Children! Be careful!" appealed the superintendent mechanically. Poor man, already he had done a hard day's work!

As well might he have cautioned a river running downhill. Jostled past you girls and boys, elbows in ribs, shoulder thrusting shoulder, in a competition that recognized no sex. Like lightning the hack is occupied to overflowing; packed with two lines, facing each other, of flushed, excited children, with here and there a flustered matron; you and Hen, as stated, holding the end seats, Billy Lunt (he wasn't a Baptist, either) up with the driver, but Snoopie, crafty, ragged Snoopie, hanging on at the steps!

The 'bus rolls off. You all shout back derisively at your outstripped associates.

Father had darkly hinted that you should take an umbrella and rubber boots, and spoken of "total immersion," whatever that might be; but, lo, the sky is cloudless, the morn is of sparkling summer, the air is fresh, everything is lovely, the town is behind and the picnic before, and you don't care, any more than you know, what he meant! You are in the 'bus; and the only person you envy is Snoopie, perilously clinging to its rear.

With the horses at a trot he springs on and off, drags his feet or sprints behind, and is continually saying "Lookee!" while he performs some new adroit, impish deed. The women gasp and exclaim "Oh!" "I wish he wouldn't!" and "Mrs. Miller, can't *you* stop him!" Then somebody's hat blows off and creates a diversion.

Half a block in your wake is the other 'bus, and occasionally jogs apace a carriage, with suggestive rattle of dishes and bulge of hamper.

Your vehicle rumbles over a creek bridge and slowly rounds a curve.

"I see it! I see it!" announces Billy, wriggling on his elevation.

You all stretch necks to "see it," too. Yes, there, just before, in the woods to the right, are the forms of the earlier invaders—the good men and women constituting the volunteer band of provision-arrangers.

The 'bus turns to the roadside. Issues from the driver a long and relieved "Whoa-oa!" But, even as he says it, you and the other boys are out, over the sides. Under the fence you scoot, to race, madly whooping, up the wooded slope, fearful lest you are missing something. After you scamper, more timidly, the little girls, and last of all, ungallantly consigned to bring the picnic odds and ends, toil your elders.

The 'bus rolls back to town, carrying a man or so delegated to get inevitably forgotten articles.

Now all the wood is riotous with scream and shout. It is a wood filled with possibilities. Early somebody discovers a garter-snake, and at the rallying-cry destruction violently descends upon the harmless thing. Immediately, dangling from the end of a stick, it spreads confusion wherever feminine humanity may be encountered. At its approach the little girls squeal and run, the larger girls shriek and expostulate, and the various mothers shrink and glare indignantly. The superintendent it is who boldly interferes, takes the limp reptile, and throws it away.

"There!" sigh glad onlookers.

But Snoopie marks its fall, and presently recovers it; thereafter to carry it around in his pocket, intent upon sticking it down unsuspecting comrades' backs.

In the ravine is the shallow creek. As a means of entertainment the creek is about as good as the dead snake. 'Tis jump it and rejump it; 'tis wade it with shoes on and 'tis wade it with shoes off; and 'tis splash far and wide, to see which boy shall get the wetter.

Milder spirits may elect to search for "pretty flowers," or "help mamma," or play "Pussy Wants a Corner," and "Ring Around a Rosie," where solicitous eyes might fondly oversee; where busily labor and perspire the superintendent and assistants, hanging swings and hammocks, lifting, opening and unpacking; where benignly moves the minister, diffusing unspoken blessings. But you and yours must have more strenuous recreation. So already, when word is transmitted that "they're makin' the lemonade," your knickerbockers are torn from shinning up trees, your waist is limp from romping through the creek, and your face is red, and scratched, and streaming, and dirty.

You are having fun.

Lemonade! Two tubs of it, in the middle of each a lump of ice, about the ice floating disks of lemon, and a thirsty crowd encircling all.

"Be careful, children. Let the little girls drink first, boys. My, my! That's not the way!" cautioned Mr. Jones, as, the supply of tin cups proving insufficient, some of you evinced a disposition to "get in all over."

The little girls politely tripped off, wiping their mouths with their best handkerchiefs. You and Hen *et al.* lingered. Eventually the tubs were left unguarded. The moment seemed propitious for new diversion.

"Let's see who can drink the most!" proposed Hen.

The idea was brilliant. To hear was to act.

It was plunge in your cup and gulp; and plunge it in and gulp; and fail not to throw the residue in your neighbor's face. Fast and furious waxed the play, with Snoopie appearing to be sure winner.

"Aw, you ain't drinkin' it all! That ain't fair!" you accused, and the other boys joined in.

YOU KNEW OF WHAT IT SPAKE AND SMELLED

"Shut up! I am, too!" replied Snoopie angrily; and proceeded with his count: "Fourteen."

Distanced, his competitors paused, and jealously, but half admiringly, watched.

"Bo-oys! Bo-oys!"

The gentle soprano voice with the reproachful, shocked inflection made you drop tin cups, the batch of you, and hastily look.

'Twas the minister's wife. In power she stood above the superintendent, even, and only slightly below the minister himself.

"Why, why! You mustn't do that!" she objected, bearing down.

Mustn't you? Well, all right; there was lots else to do, and, soaked without and within, reeking of lemonade, you withdrew to do it.

"Gee—I drunk fifteen!" boasted Snoopie, patting his stomach.

He proved to be high man. Yourself had to your score only the modest aggregate of ten.

Behind, at the scene of the late contest, arose sounds of lamentation and dismay over the state of the tubs.

Stately, mute, impenetrable, with baffling rag-carpet covering their tops, in the shade stand the two ice-cream freezers, and on all sides of them the feet of you and your cronies, and of the little girls as well, have well-nigh worn bare the woodland sod. But now, torn away by less exalted emotions, you and Hen revolve around Mrs. Schmidt's tablecloth spread on the ground and weighted down with dishes.

Here is to be your station at dinner. Other cloths there are, spread about, but Hen recommends his mother's. There will be a family feeling, and less chance of neglect.

Drag slower and slower the minutes. Hen goes foraging, and returns gleefully with a cooky apiece. The delicious smell of sliced tongue and ham and boiling coffee permeates the air.

"Henry, if you and John don't keep out from under foot I'll take you right straight home!" threatens Mrs. Schmidt, exasperated.

Other women, too, lower at you.

"Yes, boys," chimes in the superintendent; "run away and play, and don't bother the people getting dinner. When we're ready we'll call you."

But, oh, dear, supposing something should be all eaten up before you got there!

At last, at the very last—as the French emphatically express it, *à la fin des fins*—your rebuffs are over. You are actually bidden to advance. 'Tis barely the wink of an eyelash, but 'tis enough; and before a word is spoken you are there, the two of you, sitting elbow to elbow, on your calves, against the cloth: greedy-eyed, watery-mouthed, faint-stomached.

From right and left come trooping young and old, none of them, save one or two couples from the Bible-class, trooping from very far. They settle like pigeons fluttering down to corn. About each cloth a circle is formed. Nobody is homeless. And isn't it time to start in? Alas! not yet.

From his place ("Mr. Jones, *do* sit down! You look tired to death. Sit right here!" has been the imploration, and he has yielded) the superintendent bobs up and loudly claps his hands, and says: "Sh!"

"Sh!" assist sundry whispers, as warning to you and your mates.

It is the blessing, for, as Mr. Jones subsides, the minister rises.

He prays long and fervently. Out of the corners of your eyes you continue to scan sandwich, and cake, and jelly, and pickles, while your nose wriggles like the nose of an inquiring rabbit. You wonder why the minister cannot quit; but, ignoring every good stopping-point, he proceeds on and on.

IGNORING EVERY GOOD STOPPING POINT, HE PROCEEDS ON AND ON

"I will if you will," dares Hen; therefore you generally do.

Comes coffee and more lemonade; comes pie—apple, lemon, blueberry, custard; comes cake—chocolate, lemon-layer, jelly-layer, plain, frosted, cocoanut, spice, angel-food.

"Um! Um!" revels Hen at intervals.

"Um! Um!" you respond, in perfect sympathy.

Comes ice cream in "heaping" saucers!

Come cookies and sweet crackers, gingerbread, cream-puffs, kisses and oranges.

You hear Hen groan with pent-up disgust. You slyly groan back.

"Amen."

It has come! Mrs. Schmidt's glance flashes rebuke in your direction, but neither you nor Hen cares. High swells an instant chorus of talk and rattling staccato of dishes. Hither and thither flit busy servers; and, behind the backs of the circle, down your way is progressing in solemn state a huge tray of sandwiches.

You watch it eagerly. It brushes your shoulder. You and Hen grab together. They are bun sandwiches, with cold boiled ham between. Your mouth opens against yours, and your teeth meet through it.

"Yum, yum!" you mumble ecstatically to Hen.

"Yum, yum!" agrees Hen.

Come other sandwiches—tongue and beef and potted ham; come cold fried chicken and pressed veal loaf; come jelly—several kinds—and pickles, sweet and sour. Sometimes you hesitate.

(Concluded on Page 28)

THE PICNICKERS

When Middle-Age Tries to be Young Again

BY EMERY POTTLE

ANNE'S cousin had just gone. We ask her to dinner very often because she likes us a lot. It has, I believe, never occurred to her to ask herself whether we like her as much as she likes us. It probably never will—she's very unselfish. Anyhow, she's a nice, unmarried person—of the sort you always refer to as "the girls," no matter what unmarried age they reach. She's awfully susceptible to intellectual things and wants to talk about them intelligently. But we don't encourage her much in that; though occasionally she eludes us and insists on recounting anecdotes of famous people she has never met. These stories generally haven't any point, but this, we consider, she never notices. She likes so to think she is entertaining us. I don't at all mind her, now that I've found out she doesn't suspect you aren't really listening—and that's another proof of her unselfish spirit. So far as I know Anne's cousin, Effie Jackson, has but one habit you could really call a vice—and that is her persistent and callous pleasure in picnics.

She is always arranging them. We've grown into referring to Effie, in our talk, as the "Patient Picnicker." As a matter of fact, I suppose she has never once left our apartment without stopping in the hallway—it's a dismal entrance, anyway—and suggesting a picnic. "Just four or six of us, you know, and take our own supper," she begins ingratiatingly. "It really will do you good." Before we knew her well enough to be rude to her we used to get awfully embarrassed trying to refuse decently. But now we merely smile vaguely and uncertainly, and say with kindly patronage: "What a pleasant idea! How nice of you to think of us." Then we forget all about it.

She had been rather more picnickly determined than usual on this particular evening; in fact, she'd forced us into: "Well, I'm afraid not on *Thursday*, but——"

"Well, why not *next week?*" she returned undaunted.

"Next week? Oh, next *week*, why——"

"And we could get Willie and Maude, too, I'm *sure*."

"Why—oh, yes—Willie and Maude——"

"You know you *both* need an *outing*," said Effie solicitously.

"We—we'll let you know. Good-night," I faltered.

"Need an outing, indeed," said I to Anne; "she'll be suggesting next that I ought to join the Dennis O'Toole Recreation and Amusement Club and go up East River on a barge, dancing all the afternoon and evening!"

"She's awfully kind-hearted—she does it to give us a good time," Anne replied reprovingly.

"You don't intend to go on this—this godless excursion," I demanded fearfully, "do you, Anne?"

"Don't you think that——"

"No, I do not," I hastily forestalled.

"But she's so——"

"I know she is—that's the point."

"But, my dear, she's so unselfish and——"

"See here, Anne," I inquired with judicial firmness, "do you *want* to go to this——"

"I'm not sure but we ought——"

"Anne, stop talking like this. The first thing you know you *will* want to go. It's no moment to be tender-hearted—you'll get us both in for an awful time of it if you go on in this good-old-Effie way."

"I'm glad I haven't your brutal ways," returned Anne pleasantly. "Shall you put me in an Old Ladies' Home when I get toothless and feeble?"

"You won't live to be toothless and feeble if you begin to frequent the lunch-basket," I retorted with spirit. "Do you mean to tell me you actually think it would be *fun* to ride ten thousand miles in a trolley car just to sit on a domesticated river-bank and eat crumby things out of a pasteboard box with Willie and Maude and Effie?"

"And *you*."

"Yes—and me, very peevishly me."

"No, it wouldn't be fun. I've seen you on picnics before, dear," said Anne with truth.

I grinned cheerfully. "Nice girl," said I. "'The heart of her husband trusteth in her: she doeth him good and not evil.' Let's not go, Anne. Be a good fellow, and say we don't have to go."

"I suppose there *would* be mosquitoes and crawly things," considered Anne, giving in slowly.

"The early worm always spoils the picnic."

"Oh!" said Anne suddenly, "do you remember the picnic we went to with the Applebys last year—on the Fourth of July? There's something about the Fourth which makes people want to do things they never think of doing at other times. The wind died out, you know, and you and Freddie Appleby had to pull the sailboat home through the canal three miles. If my head hadn't ached so, and my nose hadn't been so burned, and it hadn't been so hot, I should have laughed myself into hysterics."

"Oh, yes, I remember it," said I bitterly. "It should have taught you a lesson."

"I didn't get over that day for two weeks," continued Anne; "and we went for the *rest*."

"We got nearly everything we could," I remarked coldly, "except the jaundice and St. Vitus' dance. Picnics are things designed by well-meaning, offensive persons to attract their own kind and ruin the digestions and tempers of others."

"It is a sign you are unselfish," Anne continued thoughtfully. "I've noticed that the people who go about getting them up are always lovely characters."

"You have hit upon a sad truth, Anne. But the people who go about seeking what they may devour at picnics are selfish. Honestly, don't you think the lovely-character business is a very much overrated thing? Personally I like selfish people much better—though, of course, I shouldn't."

"When I married you——" began Anne with a twinkle in her eye.

"Exactly," said I with undignified haste. "But you'll have to admit that was no picnic."

"No," considered Anne graciously, "I suppose not. It's been something of an entertainment, though. And after all, I don't think there's any need to worry. Effie always forgets about her picnics—her memory is very near-sighted."

"Well, it's an insecure peg to hang on, but it's true she does forget easily. The fact is, Anne, I've been to picnics all my life, more or less. And now I've come to the point where I can't bear another one. I've had 'em in all their hideous forms. I've eaten baked beans off a shingle, along with watermelon, and angel-cake, and boiled ham, and lemonade, at Sunday-school picnics. I have carried great hampers of indigestion up damp, unhealthy glens. I've sat on the dusty grass in the blazing sun with only a lettuce sandwich and an olive between me and the red ants. I've done 'em in boats with lobster salad and beer; I've done 'em in automobiles with lemon ice which you ate with your hands; I've done 'em on beaches and hills and meadows. I've even been to one in an undertaker's wagon drawn by a black hearse horse—it rained all that day and we ate our food in a barn. From early childhood till now I've gone on with picnics trying to make believe it was nice fun. Now, *it's over*."

"I must say that I like a picnic that you go to in a tally-ho or an automobile and find the servants have arrived beforehand and have prepared a beautiful meal—all you do is to eat it and go home again." Anne lingered over the words.

"I suppose," I remarked, "that when Effie goes to Heaven she'll be getting up picnics for 'just a few of the nicest angels' there, don't you?"

Anne giggled. "Don't be blasphemous. 'Tisn't at all likely that they have picnics in Heaven."

"My, what a nice place it'll be! But Effie won't care for it," I murmured sleepily. "Poor Effie, she'll have to go to——"

"How *can* you?" demanded Anne.

"To her picnics alone. I won't accompany her," I finished triumphantly.

. . . . . .

"I'm very sorry, dear, but it can't be helped, I'm afraid!" Anne regarded me with the cheerful face of the guilty wife. A slight strain of uneasiness was in her cheer. I had just come in from a long walk. (I hate long walks; I can't see why I take them.)

"The cook?" I asked briefly but poignantly.

"No—at least, not at once."

"Not my meerschaum pipe?"

"Of course not. Don't you keep it locked up always?"

"Yes, I do, but —— Well, if it isn't those two you can tell it. I'm prepared now."

"It's—Effie." Anne laughed with affected merriment.

"Effie? I knew she couldn't be helped. Her trouble is chronic picnickitis." A dreadful thought occurred to me. "Anne, you don't intend—oh, I say, that's too mean of you for ——"

"There's no use abusing *me*," said Anne virtuously. "It had to be. I couldn't help it. You know you got her expectations all roused by your 'next week,' and 'Oh, yes, Willie and Maude,' and all that. You've brought it on yourself. What could *I* say when Effie came to-day fairly beaming? You know her shiny 'Good-morning-have-you-used' way. She's arranged it all, she says, and it's—the picnic—it's to be to-morrow. We're to meet her and Willie and Maude at the ferry, and then—then I *think* it's trolley cars, and boats ——"

"Rowboats?" I demanded bitterly.

"Yes, I think so, and our dinner on the shore of a little lake, and—well, if you'd *seen* her you wouldn't *sit* there like that and *talk*. She was just *happy* over it—I didn't have the heart to refuse—besides, I couldn't think up any decent excuse right off that way—you never can."

"You said we'd come?" I inquired distantly.

"Effie's *so* unselfish," Anne remarked weakly. "Yes, I did. We've got to go."

"Oh, Anne, how could you? You needn't answer," I added hastily. "I know just how you could. We'll have to go. The only ill-natured remark I shall allow myself is this: I'm glad Effie's *your* cousin and not *mine*, because if she *were* mine, and I should have a nasty time on her picnic, you'd imply that it was all the fault of the relationship."

Anne smiled a reminiscent smile. "I don't mind Effie. Do you remember the day your Aunt Julia——"

"As we were saying," I interrupted rudely, "we'll go to this—and let it be a warning to you. Only, for goodness' sake, don't say before we go: 'You *may* have a very good time, *after all*'—will you?"

"What does the paper say for to-morrow?" evaded Anne absently. "Rain?"

It proved to be a fair day on the morrow, and this was disconcerting. "It's a lovely day; it's going to be hot," early decided Anne, putting her matutinal head out of a window. "We'd better wear thin clothes."

"People always wear thin clothes at picnics—it makes it nice in case of rain."

"And we must be *sure* to be at the ferry on time," she proceeded. "The basket——"

I gazed at her miserably. "Is it a basket?"

"Why, we've got to have food, you know."

SHE KEPT COUNTING THEM

"Yes, I know. But couldn't it go in a hatbox, or a dress-suit case, or a steamer trunk? I'd rather carry any of them than a basket—I hate a basket."

"How silly—every one takes baskets."

"The next thing you'll be telling me I must take a sand pail and spade, or a kite, or a gramophone, or a baby," I retorted with a feeble spirit.

Effie was at the ferry when we arrived. I suspect she'd been there since early dawn. There was a resigned look in the faces of the employees about the place, and they kept a reverent distance from her. Effie stood excitedly in the midst of packages that tumbled about her like neat white rains; she kept counting them.

"Isn't it a *heavenly* day?" she cried, kissing Anne and nodding to me. "*Glorious*, isn't it? And isn't it *lovely* that you could get away?"

"Yes," I responded with reserve. "We got away—but they took our numbers."

Effie did not laugh—in order really to get her into the spirit of humor you have to tell a story about infant Georgie saying his prayers, or what the maid did the day Mr. Snooks came to call.

Presently Willie and Maude came. They took the occasion patiently. They are the kind of people whose manners and customs never undergo a sea-change. They were born polite—at least Maude was.

"Now if Doctor Towley would only come ——" twittered Effie.

"Who's Doctor Towley?" I asked Willie.

"I don't know him. It's a nice day, isn't it?" said Willie courteously.

"Of course it's a nice day," I answered with some irritation. "Why do you all keep saying that?"

"Isn't it a *charming* morning?" said Maude, coming up at that moment.

"So Willie has just told me," I responded with great interest.

"Oh, here's the Doctor now," Effie burst out cordially. "Isn't it a *splendid* day, Doctor?"

Doctor Towley was a solemn little man with a chest and a leathery face. He constantly took in breaths to expand himself. It was impressive but intimidating. His white flannel waistcoat strained at its moorings, like a yacht.

"I hope he won't get a puncture," I said to Willie.

"*Dashed fine day*, isn't it?" said the Doctor to me, tightening his chest again.

"Are we all ready?" cried Effie, exuberant now she had us on our marks.

THE DOCTOR SAT ON A ROCK AND STARED SULKILY AT THE FOOD

"All ready, dear lady," Doctor Towley declared.

"If there's anything I can't stand," I remarked to Anne crossly, "it's a person who 'dear-ladys' every woman he knows."

"Hush, he'll hear you; besides, he's supposed to be awfully clever—goes in for philosophy, or osteopathy, or something, Effie says."

"Trust Effie to find 'em."

We seized our packages and baskets and crowded gayly aboard the ferryboat, assuming the debonair face of the merrymaker. You do this partly from habit and partly because you want to overhear some stranger say: "There goes a happy party for a day's outing."

Effie hopped hilariously from bough to bough, alighting occasionally to pick up a package.

"Effie likes it, doesn't she?" I said to Willie. "I'm reminded of that nice poem—you know:

> "The pensive goat and the spritive cow
> Hilarious hopped from bough to bough."

"Silly rot," remarked Willie. "What's the answer?"

"Sometimes, Willie, you make me want to push you in front of a trolley car," I said kindly. "There isn't any answer—that's what makes it funny! We're on a picnic, you know."

The Doctor may have gone in for osteopathy, but that didn't prevent him from flirting shamefully with Effie. I said as much to Maude. She giggled with a superior laugh.

"Oh, Effie doesn't know it."

I retired to ponder deeply upon the middle-aged, maiden innocence of Effie.

It began to look presently as if my picnic pessimism was totally unfounded; as if I were going to have a good time whether I wanted to or not. The sun continued to shine, the water sparkled, we became very friendly and jovial, and—last touch of satisfaction—there *was* a trolley car waiting when we landed—the car Effie said was ours. Insensibly I lost my grip on my hard-earned picnic wisdom.

I confided to Anne apologetically: "By Jove, it *is* a nice day."

"I *knew* you'd have a good time when you *got* here," she returned beamingly.

"Oh, I haven't got so far as that!" I hedged.

We hired two rowboats of a pleasant, profane old man—it's interesting to observe that people who let rowboats are always profane, and I'll bet I know why—a four-oared affair, and a two-oared. The blue lake slapping genially against the float, the original gayety of Effie, the stiff, lung-filling breeze, stirred our party to young enthusiasm. Anne began some maritime ditty involving "Jolly boating weather," and Willie took off his hat and rolled up his sleeves, secretly feeling his biceps.

It didn't need any casting of lots to see how we were to divide ourselves.

"Dear lady," said Doctor Towley to Effie, stripping off his coat and rounding himself out like a keg, "would it not be well for us to take the smaller boat and some of the packages, leaving these young people to come in the other vessel?"

Effie, with a bright smile, intrepidly intrusted herself to the chesty one, and we presently embarked. There were four miles to be rowed up the lake. The wind was with us. I wore my best white shirt, which Anne says reminds her so gratifyingly of the hero in the melodrama when he pulls off his jacket and saves the heroine from drowning in the jiggling canvas waves of the English Channel.

"Let's hit it up!" said I to Willie. We did. I began to use the Courtney stroke, which I had never previously used—at least it seemed like the Courtney stroke. Willie said his was the Bob Cook method—he liked that better. We told stories of rowing episodes, letting Maude and Anne infer that we had come pretty close to making the 'Varsity in our day. The girls looked on in the pride of ownership, occasionally putting in with astonished admiration:

"Why, dear, *I* didn't know *that!* You never told *me* ——"

Willie and I bore our laurel wreaths with modest triumph, and rowed harder.

The lusty charm of the morning wore off gradually but inevitably. I could almost hear Willie's back creak as he bent to and fro. We didn't talk so much. Anne and Maude ceased to dabble their hands in the water and to insist on changing places. The sun came and sat hotly on the ends of our noses. There was a decided monotony in sticking the oars in the water and jerking them out again. I suddenly remembered how I hated rowing.

It was a great relief to hear Effie's soprano whoop from the shore—she and the Doctor had started long before us in order to find the place Effie thought she remembered. When we landed it appeared she hadn't found it. It was also evident that she didn't at all like the place we were in. She said so several times with a pointed look at the Doctor man.

"This isn't *at all* the place!" she kept protesting. "*I'm sure* I don't know *why* we came here." Effie's face was awfully flushed and she looked angry. The Doctor sat on a rock and stared sulkily at the food-baskets, expanding his chest to dangerous dimensions.

"It seems like a nice place," said Anne pacifically.

"It *is*," growled Doctor Towley argumentatively.

"It's not *at all* the place!" Effie repeated, tremulously defiant.

We were all left just a bit helpless. Nowadays we've grown so civilized that you can't have a decent quarrel with any one. You have to be refined and get out of it with "Oh, it doesn't in the least matter."

"How blue the lake is from here," said Maude.

"Isn't it nice to get away from the city," contributed Anne.

"The row will give us an appetite, I reckon," helped Willie weakly.

I said some silly words about the birds and flowers, I believe; and the situation was set and splinted for the moment.

HOPPING ABOUT EXCITEDLY AND POINTING AT THE LITTLE RED FLAMES

Effie assumed culinary command. She's the kind of person who knows how to do everything at a picnic—and you let her. After collecting, with great pains, all the little sticks we could—a disagreeable job—and trying unsuccessfully to pull down ancient trees, the fire was started, and Effie began to heat several large, flat stones on which to cook the steak. The food was unpacked by Anne and Maude—neither of whom can cook at all, they insist.

"Take him away," whispered Anne darkly.

"Whom?" I asked vaguely.

"The Doctor. He irritates her. He acted so dreadfully, Effie says, on the way up. She's in a perfectly nervous state over it."

"What did he do?" I demanded eagerly.

"He flatly refused to row another *step*—at least, another *foot*. He said his hands were all blistered and he was tired—and he had all the provisions. And Effie said he simply landed her here, wouldn't go an *inch* farther. She's frightfully upset."

Willie and I lured the Doctor to a stony little beach. I regarded him with dislike tempered with covert admiration for his temerity. We had just begun to talk him into a decenter humor and to hear how he developed his chest when Maude uttered a piercing scream.

"It's a snake!" cried Willie. "Maudie, what is it?"

We dashed back to the commissariat; the Doctor remained where he was, imperturbable.

The fire had got away. Effie and Maude and Anne were hopping about excitedly, holding up their skirts, and pointing at the little red flames sneaking with remarkable rapidity through the dried grass, straight for a fence and the woods beyond.

"Put it *out!*" screamed Anne tragically.

"I knew this wasn't *at all* the place!" wailed Effie.

"Willie, *do* something!" advised Maude with vigor.

It took fully half an hour to persuade the fire that it mustn't climb the fence and play in the woods. We beat it out with green branches; the smoke got in our eyes and grime settled on hands and clothes. Willie burned a hole in his new flannel trousers, and my hero-shirt looked like a coal-heaver's jumper. The whole business put us in a bad temper. After it was all out Effie began to cry—unselfish people cry easily.

"What's the matter, Effie?" said Anne coldly.

"My b-best table-c-cloth," choked Effie. She held it up—that is, a small end of it; the fire had eaten away the remainder. In passing it had also licked up the napkins, scorched the sugar, boiled the can of drinking water, and fried three beautiful pounds of steak into a hard, black, squiggly knob.

"Looks like Elijah's performance at Mount Carmel," said I interestedly, "except this fire didn't, so far as I know, come from Heaven, and it hasn't licked up the stones and the water in the drinking-can."

"Well, all I can say is, Effie," began Anne severely, "you were very foolish to *bring* your best tablecloth and napkins on a picnic. My, how that smoke makes your head feel!"

"Doesn't it!" added Maude crossly. "I should have thought, Effie, that you could have——"

"That's what I say," I went on. "The idea of bringing your best tablecloth——"

"You brought your best white shirt," retorted Effie desperately.

"I *wore* it. You didn't wear your tablecloth, did you?"

"I, I-look at the st-st-eak," Effie sobbed dramatically.

Willie, I grieve to say, broke into an unfeeling laugh.

Just then the Doctor strolled up, cool and untarnished. We glared at him indignantly.

"Ah, a little conflagration, I see," he remarked airily. We wiped the sweat into our smoke-begrimed faces. I think Willie swore softly.

"Do you, indeed?" I answered blandly. "I didn't know. It's nothing, really—we did it just for fun—it was fun, wasn't it, Willie? Have some of the burnt offering, won't you? We're about to eat our frugal picnic dinner."

Doctor Towley muttered something to the effect that "It 'twere done 'twere well 'twere done quickly," but whether he referred to the steak or the picnic I am uncertain. We left him pretty much to himself, the brute.

Things rapidly took on a dismal hue. The elasticity of morning settled into the torpor of midday. The psychological moment for eating had passed—wiped out by the flames. There was nothing left of our appetites save a plaintive gnaw deep within. Effie, with patient tread—a most irritatingly patient tread—crept angelically about collecting such food as she could find. It made us all angry—though we didn't want to help her. It suddenly seemed all patient Effie's fault that we were caught there, anyhow.

Presently she smiled at us in the "my head is aching—but, never-mind-me" way of the unhealthy good, and called us to our meal. We squatted about the remnant of the tablecloth, with faces red and purple from fighting the flames, holding on our knees little wooden plates. Effie dumped on these an untidy succession of pickles, and burnt potatoes, and currant jelly, and bananas, and sugar wafers. We ate them stickily. Occasionally we thought of the martyred steak and sighed. Maude told us a lively story about the awful time her mother had once on a burning steamer on a river; she nearly perished, it turned out. Effie ate nothing—which made us very resentful and conscience-stricken—but sat stiffly with a red consciousness of expression. When she spoke it was in a kind of Little Eva murmur—I expected to hear her inquire wanly: "Where is the New Jerusalem, Uncle Tom?"

Anne went and sat under a tree all alone. When Anne does that it's a tremendously bad sign—she hates to be alone. I strolled over to her. I began pathetically:

"'There is no pie or pudding, father,
So I will give you this:
And on the blacksmith's toil worn brow
She printed a childish kiss.'"

"Ugh! Don't! You make me—— I am now. I think it was—— Oh, *go* away!"

"Is it your soul, Anne, or is it the picnic?" I inquired solicitously.

"Whatever it is," said Anne wearily, "it's no picnic!"

I strolled back to the others. They sat crumbly about the ground, their little wooden plates entomologically covered with specimens. The Doctor was mushily consuming the last sallow banana. Maude, with her back to Willie, was, I must confess, licking her fingers. Effie patiently scraped things from one pasteboard box into another. I don't know why. She smiled with the dreary brightness the unselfish insist on assuming when you want to be low and dismal of mind.

"I think I see a blackbird," she offered entertainingly.

I regarded her coldly. "It's probably the smut on the end of your nose, Effie," said I ill-temperedly.

The Doctor and Willie and I withdrew to the pebbly beach of the lake to smoke. The Doctor rather fancied my cigarettes, not having brought any of his own. He smoked five in rapid succession. I watched him in moody silence.

"Tobacco has, indeed, a soothing effect," he remarked dictatorially.

"I dare say—if you take enough of it."

"Quite so. I say, may I trouble you for——"

I handed him the cigarette case meekly.

"Yes—it *is* soothing," he repeated, "Mister—Mister—ah, I have forgotten your name."

"Don't mention it, I beg," said I.

Willie grinned weakly.

(Continued on Page 24)

WE ATE THEM STICKILY

The Memoirs of an American

By ROBERT HERRICK

Author of The Common Lot, The Web of Life, etc.

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"YOU AREN'T MUCH TROUBLED WITH SCRUPLES, VAN!"

F. B. MASTERS

CHAPTER XI

JUST before we were married Sarah and I went down to my old home in Jasonville. She was determined that I should make it up with my folks: it hurt her gentle heart to think that I had lived all these years without any news of the old people. It was a freezing January day when we drove up to the red-brick house next the store. As we rattled over the rutty streets in the depot carriage, and passed the small frame houses all closed in for the winter, I couldn't help feeling a most pharisaical pleasure in knowing that I wasn't condemned to spend my life in this bleak little town.

When I knocked at the door, mother came to see who was there. She knew me at once, but she looked at me slowly, in the questioning way I remembered so well, before she said:

"Well, Van! You've come back?"

"Yes, mother, and brought with me the best girl in the world."

"I am glad to see you both," she said quietly.

"And how's father?" I asked nervously.

"Your father died nearly three years ago. We didn't know where to send word to you."

There was no reproach in her voice: it was as if she expected nothing of me. We went into the house and sat down, and began to talk. It was solemn and painful all around, and if it hadn't been for Sarah I should have been taking an early train back to Chicago. But she was sunny and light-hearted, and seemed to take pleasure in being there. While we were sitting in the front room talking to mother a young woman came in with two small children hiding in her skirts.

"Your brother Will's wife," mother explained quickly.

"Why, May!" I exclaimed, a little embarrassed. "I didn't exactly look for this. Will didn't let me know—but still I might——"

"We wanted to write you, but we didn't know where you were. I am very glad to see you, Van," May said quietly, a little smile curving up from her lips in a way that reminded me of the girl I once loved. She took both Sarah's hands and looked straight into her eyes.

"And this is your wife, Van?"

"Not quite yet!"

Of course, I had told Sarah all about May, and I thought she might be cold to her, meeting her in this way of a sudden as Will's wife. She always said May had been hard that time before—had been too keen about her good principles to be much of a woman. Yet, as they stood there looking into each other's eyes, I could see that there would be sympathy between them. Sarah smiled as if to say: "It's all right, my dear! You see, I am glad you turned him away that time. We have no reason to quarrel, have we?"

May began to blush under that smile, as though she knew what was in Sarah's mind. Then mother brought up May's two little boys, who went to Sarah at once. Will was away somewhere and didn't come home until supper. I thought he looked pretty old for his age. Perhaps business was poor in Jasonville. The country ages a man fast when things go hard. At first he was stiffish to me, taken aback by our unexpected visit, but pretty soon he thawed to Sarah, who asked him about his boys.

After dinner Will and I went to the barn and had a long talk. It seemed that the judge had pressed father pretty hard before he died, and after his death there wasn't much left but the store, and that was mortgaged. And the business didn't amount to anything, according to Will. The mail-order business had cut into the country trade pretty badly by that time, and country people had begun more and more to go to the city to buy their goods. Moreover, time had shown that Jasonville lay to one side of the main lines of traffic. In short, Will had had to scrape the barrel to get a living out of the old store.

He asked how it had been with me, and it gave me considerable pride to tell him what I had been doing. I told him about the packing business, my sausage factory, the deal with Strauss. He opened his eyes as he smoked my cigar.

"So you struck it rich, after all, Van!"

There was something else on his mind, and after a time he managed to say:

"I hope you won't have any more hard feeling for mother and me. We all treated you pretty harsh that time; we never gave you credit for what you had in you, Van."

"I guess it would have taken a prophet to see I had anything in me but foolishness," I laughed. "Anyhow, it was the best thing that ever happened to me, Will, and I can't be too thankful that you folks in Jasonville threw me out."

"Yes, Jasonville ain't just the place for an ambitious man," he sighed. "And, Van—about May—it wasn't hardly fair. She cared most for you, then, at any rate: she wouldn't marry me, not for five years."

"Don't say another word, Will. May will make the best sort of sister. She's the right kind."

So that was the way we made it up, as two brothers should. And the next morning, after doing some thinking over night about how I could best help my brother and May, I followed Will over to the store. On the way I met the old judge, looking hardly a day older than when I saw him last. He eyed me hard, as if he didn't know me from the last tramp, but I stopped him and greeted him.

"So you're loose once more?" he grinned. "I see they shut you up as soon as you struck Chicago." He had a good time laughing at his little joke.

"Yes," I replied, "I am out once more, judge. And, from what I hear, the Harringtons have been paying you pretty well for all the green peaches I ever took off your place."

He mumbled something, and I turned on my heel, rather proud of myself, if the truth be told, being well dressed, with an air of city prosperity.

Will was in the bit of an office behind the store. The old place was as mussy and dirty as ever, with fat files of dusty old letters and accounts. The old desk where father used to make up his bills was littered with last year's mail. It was Sunday, and the musty smell of the closed store came in through the door. It all gave me the forlornest feeling I had had in years.

"This will never pay, Will," I said to my brother, who was turning the leaves of a worm-eaten day-book. "The time when the small business would pay a man anything is pretty nearly over for good."

"I suppose so," he replied despondently. "But, somehow, we must get a living out of it."

"Let the judge have it, if he'll take it. I can find you something better."

There was a place in Dround's that Will might work into; and before long he could be of use to me in a scheme that was coming around the corner of my mind into sight. As I talked, Will's eyes brightened. Before we left the little office a new kind of look, the look of hope, had come over his face. I thought he seemed already some years younger. It takes the steps of the treadmill, downward faced, to crush the spirit in a man!

That was a happy morning. Surely, one of the joys of success is to give it away to the right ones. I remember a good many times in my life that I have had the pleasure of seeing that same look of hope, of a new spirit, come into a man's face, when I gave him his chance where he was least expecting it.

"But Will, mind you, if you come to the city you'll no longer be your own man," I cautioned him. "Dround'll own you, or I shall. No doing what you want! To work with me is to work under me. Can you stand taking orders from your junior?"

"I guess, Van," he answered, without any pride, "you have shown yourself to be the boss. I'll follow."

That night, when Will and May had left us at the junction where we were to take the Chicago train, Sarah brushed my cheek with her arm in a little intimate way she had and whispered:

"May couldn't thank you. She feels it too much. You have made them so happy—there's a future now for them all. And I think, maybe, I can make you as good a wife as she could—perhaps better, some ways. May said so! Though May is a very nice woman, and I shall always love her."

"I guess you are both right," I replied, too happy to say much more.

A few weeks later, and we were married. The Drounds gave us a pretty little wedding breakfast, to which came all the friends I had in the world and a few of the many Sarah had. If Mrs. Dround was a careless hostess sometimes, that was not the day. She was specially gracious to Will and May, who were almost strangers. It was all just as it should be, and I felt proud of myself to be there and to have this handsome, high-bred woman for my wife.

It was Sarah's idea that all the others should leave the house first, and that then we should slip away quietly to the train by ourselves. So at the last, while I was waiting for my bride to come downstairs, Mrs. Dround and I happened to be alone. She looked pale and worn, as if the people had tired her. She ordered the servants to take away the great bunches of roses that filled every nook in the room.

"They are too sweet," she explained. "I like them—but in the next room."

Her fastidiousness surprised me, and, as always, I began to wonder about her. Suddenly she leaned forward and spoke swiftly, intently:

"I hope you and Sarah will be happy together—really happy!"

It was an ordinary kind of thing to say, but beneath the plain words there seemed to lie something personal.

I COULD SEE THAT THERE WOULD BE SYMPATHY BETWEEN THEM

F. B. MASTERS

"We shall be happy, of course!" I answered lightly. "There's nothing against it in sight."

"Ah, my friend, you can't count that way! Happiness is hard to get in this world, and you pass it by at odd corners and never know it." She smiled a little sadly, and then added in a more ordinary tone: "Sarah tells me that you are to be away only a little bit of a time. Does business tempt you so much that you can't resist it even now?"

"Well, I expect to love Sarah just as much when I get back to work. Business is a man's place, as the house is a woman's. Take either out of their places for long and something is likely to go wrong with them."

She laughed at my satisfied wisdom.

"Are you so needed over there in the office?"

"You must ask your husband that."

"He says that you are the cleverest man they have had for years. Does that make you proud?"

"Thank you!"

"Will you let the big dog Strauss eat us?" she laughed on.

"I'll tell you a few years later, ma'am."

"Yes," she mused, "you are right! A man, a strong man—and that's the only kind that is a man—must be at work. The sweetest love can't hold him long."

Here Sarah's voice reached us:

"You mustn't distract him today of all days, Jane!"

"He can't be distracted long, my child—by anybody!"

We had taken a pleasant house on one of the broad avenues to the south beyond the smoke-bank, with a bit of a garden and a few trees. When we got back from New York we found supper waiting for us, roses on the table, a bottle of wine ready to open, and on the sideboard a box of cigars.

"The hand of Jane!" Sarah remarked as she rearranged the flowers and put the roses on the mantelpiece.

"The hand of Jane?" I repeated dully. "You mean Mrs. Dround?"

"Yes, of course; it reaches everywhere."

And Sarah did not look as much pleased as I expected.

CHAPTER XII

"MR. DROUND seems to be doing a good deal of talking for the benefit of his neighbors," Slocum observed one day when we were lunching together.

"Oh, he likes the job of making the country over! It suits him to talk better than to sell pork."

"Did you see what he said last night?" Slocum continued.

"No, what was it? Free trade or college education?" Mr. Henry I. Dround was full of both subjects. He had always fooled more or less with politics, having come out as a mugwump and free trader under Cleveland. That kind of doctrine wasn't much in favor among the business men of Chicago, but Dround liked to be in the minority. He was an easy, scholarly speaker, and was always ready to talk at dinners and public meetings. "It seems to me I saw something in the papers of his speaking at the Jefferson Club banquet," I went on, "but I didn't pay any attention to it. The old man is rather long on wind."

"The papers missed most of the ginger. But I was there, and it was lively. Jimmy Birdsell, Hart's man, was there, too. It was this new Civil Service Bill that the silk-stockings are trying to push through the legislature. Of course, Hart and the machine are fighting it like fire. Well, your boss gave the chief speech, a good little talk, about purity and business methods in government, and all the rest of it. Birdsell sat just across the table from me, and I could see from the way he knocked his glasses about that he was getting hot. Maybe he came there for a fight. At last he boiled over:

"'Say, Mr. Dround,' he sang out in a pause between two periods, 'how about your new switch-track over in Ada Street?'

"Dround looked toward him over his glasses for a moment, as though he hadn't heard what was said, and then he went ahead with his talk. But Birdsell was some drunk and too mad to care what he did. The men beside him couldn't keep him quiet. 'I say, Dround,' he broke out pretty soon, 'we should like to hear what your firm does when it wants any little favors from the city? That might be to the point just now!'

"This time Dround couldn't pass it over. He took a drink of water and his hand shook. Then he said: 'I do not see that this is the proper time to introduce a personal matter, but since the gentleman seems concerned about my business principles, I am glad to set his mind at rest. To the best of my knowledge, Henry I. Dround & Co. have never asked and never accepted any favors from the city. Is that satisfactory?'

"'Come now, Mr. Dround,' Birdsell sneered, 'that isn't generally believed, you know.'

"'I said,' your boss ripped back, '*to the best of my knowledge*, your insinuation is a lie!' He leaned forward and glared at Birdsell. Well, there was a kind of awkward pause, everybody waiting, and then Birdsell, who must have been pretty drunk, called back: 'Ask your man John Carmichael what he does when he wants anything from the city. Ask him about your rebates, too. Then, the next time you come here telling us how to be good, you'll know more.' There was a cat-and-dog time after that, some yelling to put Birdsell out, and others laughing and clapping."

Slocum paused, and then added:

"It put Mr. Dround in a tight place."

"What of it?" said I. "Birdsell is nothing but a yellow dog. Hart keeps him to lick his platters. Every one knows that."

"I PAID THE RIGHT PEOPLE $9500. WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?"

"Yes, that's so. But he said what most every one believes is true."

"That kissing goes by favor, and most other things in this world, too? Well, what of it?"

Slocum leaned back in his chair and laughed. Then he said to me seriously:

"You aren't much troubled with scruples, Van!"

"Come, what's the use of talking good? You and I know well enough that there isn't any other way of doing business, not in any city in the country. You have got to pay for what you get, the same as elsewhere. Dround ought to know it, too, by this time, and not go 'round preaching loose—or else get out of business, which might be better!"

"I suppose so," Slocum replied solemnly. "But I always liked his sermons. Perhaps you and Carmichael could tone him down a bit just now."

"Oh, John don't mind his speeches, so long as he don't interfere with the business!"

We finished our lunch, talking of other matters, and for several days I thought no more of the incident that Slocum had related. The switch-track affair did not seem to me important. If the reformers wanted to get after us, or any other big firm, there were many more vulnerable points than that. Special privileges from the city we regarded as our rights, and that was the time of easy city councils, when the scale of prices was well known to be fixed. But there was the matter of railroad rates. Any fool could tell that, at the published tariff rates, there would be little business for the packers outside of Chicago. It was common knowledge that the trade was honeycombed with private agreements and rebate privileges, and that the fiercest part of the business was to get the right rate from the roads. Then there were the secret agreements between the packers, which were all illegal, but necessary to keep the trade from cutting prices all the time.

Carmichael attended to this end of the business for Dround, as he did of everything of real importance. He was a member of the firm now, and the wonder to me was that this smart Irishman could put up with Dround. It could hardly be a matter of sentiment. I had a warm feeling for the illiterate miner partner, with a temper about an inch long, but a big, round heart open to any friend. He had backed his way up in the world by main force, and I admired him. Besides, he had taught me how to eat, so to speak. In a word, I liked his way of doing things better than Mr. Dround's college talk.

Well, it happened that the cur Birdsell set some of the civil-service reformers on the tracks of Brother Dround, and they got a smart newspaper reporter to work over the whole matter. There was a lively write-up in one of the papers, all about our switch-track over in Ada Street, with photographs and figures, and a lot more about the way the packers did business with the city. When I read the piece in the paper I took the trouble to pass by our new warehouse on my way to the office. The trackage was in, sure enough. Carmichael was just the man to have a thing done and settled by the time the public got around to talk about it!

Mr. Dround was in his office bright and early this morning, and sent for me.

"Harrington," he began, "what do you know about this talk in the papers?"

Mr. Dround seemed very nervous, not sure of himself.

"Why," I smiled, "I don't know much more than what the papers said. Carmichael, you know——"

"Yes," Mr. Dround interrupted impatiently. "Mr. Carmichael is in New York, and gets back this morning; but I thought you might——" He hesitated, not wishing to admit his own ignorance. "I will send for you later when Mr. Carmichael comes in," he concluded.

So when John arrived he had us both in his office.

"You want to see me?" Carmichael asked gruffly, as if he hadn't much time that morning to waste on the senior member.

"Yes, I wished to talk over certain matters that concern us all, even though they may have no immediate bearing upon the business." Mr. Dround always talked like that when he got the least nervous.

"Well, what is it?" Carmichael asked. He had just arrived, and I suppose his letters interested him more than Mr. Dround's talk.

"You may not have seen the articles in the morning papers—about—about certain privileges which it is alleged——"

"What are the boys yapping about now?" Carmichael demanded, taking up a newspaper from the desk and thrusting his big shoulders forward in an ugly fashion.

"It concerns our permit to lay that new switch-track," Mr. Dround explained.

Carmichael put the paper down and looked at the senior member in a curious way, as if he were trying to make out just what kind of a fool he had to deal with. But as he said nothing, Mr. Dround continued:

"Recently I had occasion to deny categorically that, so far as I knew, our firm ever made any such kind of arrangement as is here described. My word was challenged. It was a very painful situation, I need not say. Since then I have been thinking—I have been wondering whether this charge——"

He floundered pitifully, disliking to mouth the dreadful words. John helped him out brutally:

"You wonder whether we had to grease anybody's paw about that switch-track over in Ada Street?"

Dround nodded: "The papers say so!"

"They have to print something, don't they? What form does that do us? I wouldn't trust the whole of——a bunch of papers with a ten dollar bill. They're a lot of blackmailers—that's what they are!"

John bit off the end of a cigar and spat it out in front of Mr. Dround.

"We are not concerned with the newspapers or their motives, Mr. Carmichael," the senior member observed with considerable dignity. "What I want is your assurance that this firm—that, so far as we are concerned, this accusation is false."

We waited for the Irishman's reply. It would be an easy matter to tell a lib and set Mr. Dround's mind at rest. But

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Where Are the Business Men?

WHAT the business of this country is suffering from is the decline of the business man. We have too many "captains of industry" who look at business simply as a means to dividends; who know nothing of the practical workings of the industries they "organize" except the showings on condensed balance-sheets; who think the business man is merely a plodding, routine fellow. These "captains of industry" are very daring and dazzling—so dazzling that crowds gape at them as at a successful bandit in Sicily. But they are very dangerous also.

Aristotle said: "The best fertilizer for the field is the heel of the farmer." And this is equally true of all the other fields of industry. We shall find it out from painful experience presently. The financiers, with their palaces and their showy families, with their vast enterprises "floated" by a few hours' work under the shadow of the New York Stock Exchange, cannot take the place of the business man—no, not even with the assistance of the great lawyer to flimflam the moral code.

Boys

IT WOULD be hard to tell just what we mean when we say that boys will be boys. An Eastern newspaper has been gravely discussing why the young idea abhors a bath, and yet will spend whole long summer days in swimming. Because careless parents, says one elder, not without intimations of earliest childhood, *will* rub soap in their eyes. Quite the contrary, says another, with still more vivid recollections, the parents rub soap in their eyes only because the boys will squirm and wriggle in the loathly trial. And so a momentous question is as far as ever from solution.

Mr. Howells, in his delectable "Boys' Town," remarks that he looks back on the child he once was not so much as upon an earlier self as upon a different and quite alien person. Professor William James, the psychologist, has expressed the idea scientifically, arguing that each of us, in his own person, lives through not only the seven ages of man, but all the evolutional ages of the human race as well. He watched a child of his, he says, grow from age to age in regular sequence. It was at the stone age, it is to be presumed, that he began smashing the parlor windows. Certain it is, according to this high authority, that a boy who does not learn to fish and shoot in his nomadic age never becomes a thorough Nimrod.

The English, with their practical sense, have long recognized in their school discipline that boyhood is an alien state. The duty of laying on the rod to sweeten the child they delegate to the older boys—prefects or monitors. For a man to flog a child is degrading to both; but for one boy to flog another is only an insistence on tribal discipline.

Thus we arrive at the portentous conclusion. Boys hate to be bathed not because they love to be dirty—they are quite indifferent on the subject—but because to be tousled in a tub is an infraction of the noble independence of the savage. You may note the same wild hand-shyness in certain stages of the development of kittens and puppies. And, by the same token, boys love to dive into the chilly brook and to bask in the torrid sand. Wherefore, parents, in these spring days, when your offspring come home late of an evening with soaky locks and sand in their ears, be wisely merciful, and ask no questions.

The Vital Question

WHAT question most interests the most people to-day? Questions political and industrial come and pass. Questions of love and marriage wax and wane. But the question of how to evade the doctor and the undertaker is steadily with us all. And, as the world becomes more and more comfortable, the interest in this question increases from intense to feverish. People read the newspapers diligently, seeking for first hints of the discovery of the drug that will realize the Middle-Age Dream of the spring of the eternal youth: To be well, to be young, to live on and on!

Yet the means of accomplishing this longing in large measure are at hand, and few take advantage of them. It is "too much trouble" to exercise every day regularly. It is "too much trouble" to be careful about diet, to guard the teeth, to resist the temptation to repair indiscretions by the use of drugs that tear away vitality as they ease pain.

Still—not so many years ago a man looked and called himself old at thirty-five and a woman at thirty. It is not so to-day. To-morrow, poor indeed will be the creature that suggests decay at sixty.

In Pursuit of the Ideal

SOCIALISTS should learn to be fair and reasonable. There are two ways of subverting the existing order: by the power of truth and by the power of violence. The latter is only too often the weapon of the anarchist. Only open good sense will avail.

In his Mass and Class, Mr. W. J. Ghent begins in the most rational vein. How many of us have ever heard of "the economic interpretation of history"? It is not a new phrase, but Mr. Ghent's exposition of it in its relation to the America of to-day opens up a fresh world of thought. Without in the least underrating the force and the grandeur of ideals, he shows that when they are most powerful they have their foundation in economic necessity. Coriolanus' friend Menenius was wrong: at the pinch the belly rules the members, and even the mind itself. It was a question of taxation that gave efficiency to the ideals of the American revolution. The fighting bishops of the Middle Ages and the army chaplains of to-day are living commentaries on the partiality of our adherence to the teachings of the Prince of Peace: in defense of our fortunes and our families we fight, and make a heroism of fighting. Even charity begins at home—and sometimes has to end there. Moreover, ideals change with changing economic conditions. The lawless feudal system rested on armed might, and its ideal was personal devotion amounting almost to servility. To-day our ideal is absolute personal freedom—but to make this possible we one and all submit to rigors of law which our ancestors would have found intolerable.

To realize that the dominant forces of the world are economic forces is wholesome and helpful, however shocking at first the idea may be to our sentimental preconceptions. But does it follow that all business is to be conducted by the state? Mr. Ghent is eloquent and exhaustive in his descriptions and denunciations of the rule of graft, and contrasts the private greed of the rich with the loyal fellowship and self-sacrificing devotion of the Labor unions. He would be very glad to see the masses grow in power until they controlled all enterprise through the machinery of government.

But there is one kind of graft about which he is strangely silent—the graft of the labor leader. Not once in the book is there a mention of Sam Parks, or the faintest allusion to the danger that lies in his ubiquitous kind. Our economic system is in a parlous state; but before we turn it over to the organized masses should we not be convinced that they are less liable to be greedy and tyrannical than those who rule us now?

How Much Must a Man Pay?

AGAIN the limelight turns upon Mr. E. L. Harper. Once he was a great man in Cincinnati, with a great bank. Then he undertook a great wheat deal and ended in a great smash. The bank was looted to support the deal and the hungry pit swallowed bank, man and all. The crash swept some twenty Chicago commission houses to ruin, and, in Cincinnati, the wreckage was really awful. Harper served a term in the penitentiary. Since then, it is understood, he has made another fortune, and he comes again into notice by beginning bankruptcy proceedings which will absolve him from the old debts.

Naturally, the ghost of the wheat deal rises up and cries: "Pay!"

In a simpler day, the man's "I promise to pay" in a note was supposed to be a sacred personal obligation, binding upon his honor, and the ruined merchant rested in disgrace until he had paid his twenty shillings in the pound. You find this artless theme many times in the older literature. Nowadays, we interpret it more liberally. Most of our business is done by corporations in which there is no individual liability, and this is partly because affairs are so vast that no one would take a personal responsibility for them. You cannot, for example, imagine the late Henry Villard wringing his hands and refusing to be comforted because he was unable to pay the debts of his Northern Pacific. So there is a benevolent disposition to permit the man who still trades individually to incorporate his honor and limit its liability.

Possibly this means a lowering of moral standards. Possibly it means only a juster appreciation of the elements of the case and a more humanized attitude. At any rate, we will not bar the door of hope to the bankrupt. On the contrary, we will give him a latch-key.

The Nation's Real Dignity

A NEWSPAPER recently denounced a truthful book on political conditions as an insult to the dignity of the American people; as full of things which, if true, the American people would prefer not to have spoken of. The attack was subtler than it sounds, thus boldly stated.

As if the dignity of the American people depended upon their servants, or even upon battleships, or even upon a Washington etiquette "more rigid than that of any court in Western Europe!" The truth is that no one represents or could represent the American people. Public officials, from President down, are holders of limited and brief movable proxies to do certain things. But the American people are themselves the custodians of their own dignity; and that dignity is in no way affected by the misconduct of the servant.

The Chicago Experiment

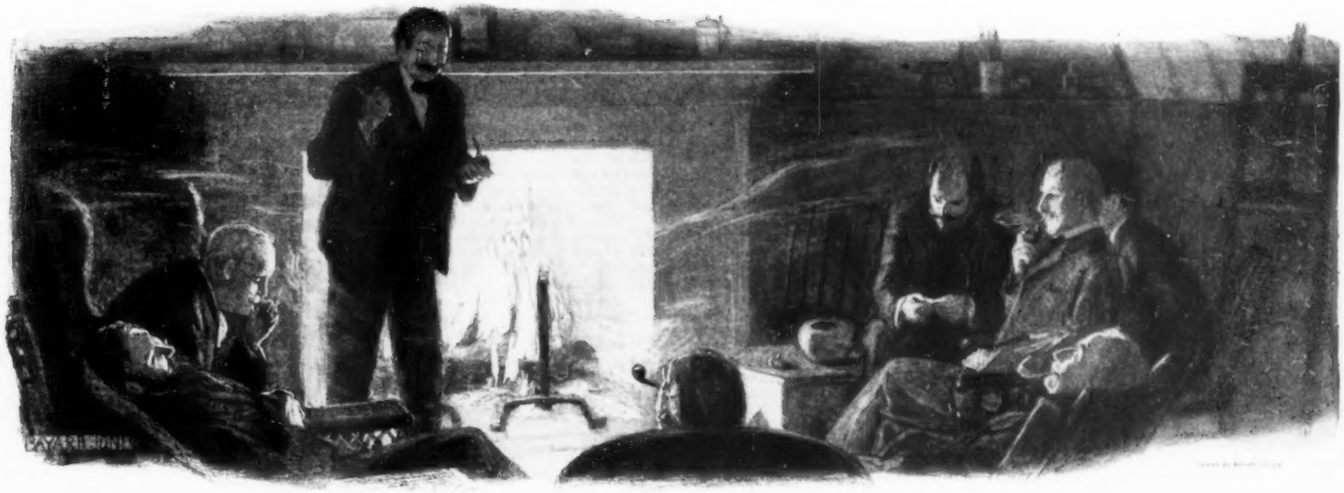
THE plan of those economic reformers who call themselves Fabians is to make us all socialists while we wait. We have been waiting a long time. A more recent brand of Utopian, of which the French shopkeeping millionaire and statesman, Jaurès, is at present the leading exponent, may be called the Etherials: taking advantage of the naturally anæsthetic state of the human mind, they are darkly plotting to make us socialists without our knowing it. Both Fabians and exponents of ether are rejoicing mightily in the fact that Chicago has resolved to operate her own street railways.

Few sensible men will deny that there are industries which can best be run by the state. All civilized governments control their own postal systems. England has added the telegraph service to the great advantage of the public, and is adding the telephone. Continental countries manage their own steam railways with mixed results. Several European cities, and notably Glasgow, have taken control of street railways with signal success. Chicago has so managed her electric-light plant as to reduce the cost of an arc lamp from one hundred and twenty-five dollars to about fifty-four dollars, and hopes for a similar gain in the matter of her street railways. Let us hope that she succeeds, and that other cities take full advantage of her experience. The socialists find their greatest hope in the modern tendency toward vast industrial combination. The trusts, they say, have proved, on the one hand, the economic value of organized monopoly, and, on the other, the tendency of such organizations, when controlled by private individuals, to tyranny and greed. If owned and run by a socialistic state, they say, the manufacture of sugar, oil and such like could be carried on as economically as now, and without public or private wrong.

It is just here that those whose names are Thomas may be permitted to doubt. Tyranny and greed, like all the positive vices, are only a virtue in excess, and uncontrolled. Without the love of great wealth and power, those examples of efficient organization in which the socialists so delight would not have been possible. Few combinations have been successful that have not been built up and managed by a single master mind. Already the efficiency of certain trusts is declining in proportion as the hand that created them has been withdrawn from their management. The official who is sure of his salary does not abound in ideas and energy like the man who is playing for the whole stake or none.

What motive force the socialists are to substitute for individual aspiration they have not yet told us, and they are not likely to tell us. Competition—the struggle to the death for life and hope—is not, in most of its outer manifestations, a pretty thing. If any man had invented it he would have got hard words from the Utopian. But it happens to have been invented by the Creator of All Things, and to be the motive power in evolutionary advance from the first protozoan to Shakespeare. It is much to be feared that systematically to forbid the individual to struggle for his own ideals and aspirations would be to make progress wait a very long time under the most powerful of anæsthetics.

THE WOOD FIRE IN NUMBER THREE—By F. Hopkinson Smith



With Especial Reference to a Girl in a Steamer-Chair

"DON'T be angry, Colonel" (no mortal man knows why Mac calls me Colonel) "but would you mind leaving that red rose you've got in your buttonhole outside in the hall, or some place where I can't smell it? Red roses have a singular effect on me." I had come in earlier than the others this afternoon and had found Mac alone.

I looked at him in astonishment. Peculiar as he sometimes is, hatred of flowers is not one of his eccentricities.

"Why, I thought you loved roses!"

"I do—all except red ones."

I unpinned the rose from my buttonhole and laid it on the shelf in a glass over his wash-basin.

"All right, anything to please you, Mac. Now out with it—give me the name of the girl and tell me why."

Mac laughed quietly to himself and settled down in his chair. For some time he did not speak.

"Go on; I'm waiting."

"Oh, it brings up a memory, that's all. You heard what Stirling said about the perfume of violets bringing back to him the little dinner he had with Christine Levoux at the Bellevue overlooking the Seine, didn't you?"

"Yes—but he didn't mention the girl's name."

"I know, but it was Christine. I remember that hat and the gloves. In my day they were black, not gray, and came up to her shoulders, like Yvette's. The eyes, though, never changed, no matter who sat opposite. Stirling bought a lot of violets that year; so did some of the others in the Quartier, until the Russian carried her off to Moscow." And again Mac laughed softly to himself. "Well, perfumes produce that same effect on me."

"Violets?" I asked, twisting my head to look into Mac's eyes.

"No; tarred hemp and roses." Then he added slowly and thoughtfully, as if he was recalling some incident in his past life: "Quite a different kind of girl, my boy, from Christine, about as different as—well, there isn't any comparison. Yes, tarred hemp and red roses. Funny combination, isn't it? And yet I never catch the odor of one without smelling the other. And the whole scene comes back, too—every detail—the rolling ship; the girl as she lay in her chair, the roses in her lap; the tones of the captain's voice—I have sometimes heard them in my sleep—the glare of the overhead light, and then the splash. Queer things, these memories!"

Mac paused, and smoked on quietly.

I made no answer. If you want Mac at his best never interrupt him. When he is in one of his reminiscent moods his philosophy, his knowledge of life, his wide personal experience, his many adventures by land and sea, make him the most delightful of conversationalists, while his choice of words and marvelous powers of description—talking as a painter talks; one who sees and who, therefore, can make you see—using words as some men do pigments, with all the force of their contrasts—make his descriptions but so many brilliantly-colored pictures. Then his voice! Suddenly, without a moment's warning, your eyes fill up, leaving you wondering why, until you remember some throat tone that vibrated through you like the note of a violin.

When he is in one of these moods, he rarely looks at me or at any one who listens—especially when he is alone with some one of his chums, and we two were alone this afternoon, it being Varnishing Day and all of the men at the Academy. He looks up at the ceiling, lying back in his chair, talking to some crack or stain in the plastering, or drops his head and talks to the smoldering coals, his human eyes fixed on the logs. This habit of talking to whatever is within the reach of his hands or legs—his brushes, palette, colors; the chair that gets in his way, the rug he stumbles over—is characteristic of the man; woodsmen have it, who live alone in great forests. Mac's explanation is that he lived so much alone in his early life that he acquired the habit in self-defense. The fire, however, seems to understand—never answering back as it does to me when I try to punch it into life, but simmering away like a slow-boiling pot, giving out a steady glow for hours as it listens, nursing its heat until the master has finished or puts on another log.

Mac refilled his pipe, rested the tongs where his hand could grasp them, and continued, his big shoulders filling the chair, the light of the blaze on his human, kindly face.

"There are great contrasts in life, my boy, that never fail to interest me—big Rembrandt things that stand out sharp and solid, sudden as the exit from a foul shaft into a sunny winter's day, white and cold. And the reverse side—the black side—that is the worst of these contrasts, the darks always predominate. Out of a yacht's warm cabin, for instance, into a merciless, hungry sea, without a moment's warning. No—nothing to do with my memory of tarred hemp and red roses—only to make my point clear to you." And Mac's head sank the lower in his chair. "Did you ever focus your mind, for one thing, on the contrasts that the two sides of a nine-inch brick wall of any house in town present? Did you never lie in your bed with your head to the plaster and wonder what was going on nine inches away from your ears? I have—I do it now. It may be sorrow, or cruelty, or death, if we did but know—some girl mourning for her lover; some woman crouching in fear; some silent body, cold in a sheet. Not always so, of course; many times the happiness is on their side and all the misery on ours; but the two atmospheres are never alike. Only nine inches of wall! Shut it out as we may—cover it with tapestries or pictures or paint—it is still within that many inches of our ears. What a blessing we can't see! Life would be a hell for some of us if we saw both sides of its brick walls at once. I try now and then to get a glimpse of both sides, because of the effects I get of light and shadow—they always appeal to me. When I do I often get a heart wrench that upsets me for days, and yet, the next opportunity, I am at it again."

Again Mac paused and looked earnestly into the fire, as if he were trying to recall to his mind, among its glowing, heaped-up coals, some picture in that rich past of his.

"And that old perfume of tarred hemp and roses," I asked, "does that suggest one of them?"

"Yes, one of the strongest I ever experienced; and yet it was only one of the things that goes on every day. A steamer's deck was the brick wall this time. On our side a cloudless sky, fresh air, light, chairs filling the length of the deck; whisperings in corners, two lovers hanging over the rail; some in the bow away from intruders. Now and then a line of song wafted from open cabin windows. Seaward, a stretch of steely blue dominated by a clear, round moon, its light flooding a pathway of silver down to the very side of the ship—a pathway along which angels might have stepped—were stepping, if we could have seen.

"This was one of the times when I had both sides of the wall in review—she did not. Her heart and mind were on other things. No—nothing that you think, old man—not another Christine—I left all that behind me—not anybody in particular, really—just a girl I met on board. There were a dozen others as pretty—prettier. Our steamer chairs happened to come together, that was all. We were but two days out and her roses were still fresh—big red ones, that some of her friends had sent her. They lay in her lap over her steamer rug. I picked them up for her when they dropped to the deck, and so the acquaintance began.

"Such a happy girl, with a fresh, sunburnt skin and strong chest and capable, earnest eyes—no nonsense about her, no coquetry." Mac hesitated for an instant, and a look of peculiar tenderness came into his face—one I always remembered. Then he went on:

"Just a plain, straightforward American girl, with a good mother at home and a matter-of-fact father who had sent her abroad with an aunt who was flat on her back in her cabin most of the time; she herself looked as if she had never known a day's sickness in her life. This was her first trip abroad. Half a dozen young men and as many young girls had come to see her off. Her share of the flowers sent on board had been the largest and she was as happy over it as a child with a new toy—that kind of a girl. She wanted, of course, to know about Mont Blanc and the Rhigi, and whether the Salon would be open, and which pictures she ought to see—and what at the Luxembourg—all the questions a girl asks when she finds you can paint. Her joyousness, though, was what appealed to me. I like happy people. To her the deck of the steamer was the top of a great hill from which she looked down on sunshine and peace—no clouds, no dark shadows—only perspectives of greater happiness yet to come. This was her side of the wall.

"I did not disturb her outlook. What use would it have been? Why tell her of what was going on, for instance, under her very eyes? Why let her know that that tightly-built

Editor's Note—This is the third of a series of stories by F. Hopkinson Smith, each complete in itself, but all told beside The Wood Fire in No. 3. The next will appear in an early number.

young man who seemed to be so devoted to the pale, hollow-eyed gentleman of sixty, sitting beside him in the smoking-room or in the steamer-chairs—never five feet away from him day or night—was a Scotland Yard detective, and that the hollow-eyed invalid would have a pair of handcuffs slipped over his white, trembling wrists as soon as the gangplank was fastened to the dock? Or that the thoughtful, clean-shaven young man, who now spent most of his time in walking the deck, had never entered the smoking-room since the first night when the purser took him one side and, calling him by a name not on the passenger-list, had informed him in measured tones that it might interfere with his comfort if he took the wrapper from another pack of his own or anybody else's cards during the remainder of the voyage. Neither did I tell her that third night out where I had spent the afternoon, except to say that I had been with Mr. Hunter, the chief engineer, in his room several decks below where we sat—down among the furnaces and hot steam and plunging pistons, adding that the Chief was a great friend of mine and had been for years, ever since the day he had directed the engines of that same vessel off the coast of Cuba. Englishman though he was, he would not leave his ship, and so he enlisted for the fight and saw it all through.

"'When Sigsbee opened up on them two vessels,' he told me—one was a gunboat—'I was up the ladder as far as I could get and still keep my eyes on what was going on down below, and I tell you he made the water bile around 'em as if it was raining solid shot, and it was—don't you make any mistake, it was! You'd a-thought so if you'd seen 'em turn tail and hump for the shore!'

"I had never known the under side of the Chief before (not having been, of course, at Santiago), but I knew him then. When you get to know him as I do now he may sometime, in a burst of confidence, open the drawer of a locker behind his bunk and show you a little paper box and inside of it a small bit of copper about the size of a big cent, with a cross-bar and a ribbon, bearing the crest of the United States and an inscription saying that it was for gallant conduct in saving lives aboard the Colon, or something like it.

"But that struggle is not what was mixed up with my perfume of tarred hemp and roses—quite another affair altogether. The Chief and I had had some previous talk about it, and so I was not surprised when his messenger approached my chair and the girl's, and said in a low voice, bending close to me:

"'Mr. Hunter's compliments, sir, and he would like to see you in his room if you don't mind. He says if you can't come it will be at twelve sharp, and you're not to mention it to any of the passengers, sir.'

"She looked at me curiously, having heard the messenger's words, but I did not explain, and, rising quickly, left her with the roses in her lap—her last bunch, she told me.

"Hunter met me at the door—the second engineer and the ship's doctor were inside his room.

"'That stoker died about an hour ago, wasn't it, Doctor?' Hunter asked, turning to the ship's surgeon.

"'Yes.'

"These men are accustomed to such incidents; there is hardly a voyage without one or more of them. To me it was but the opening of another crack in one of my brick walls.

"'What of?' I asked.

"'Exhaustion—want of food, perhaps, and the heat. The heart gave out,' answered the doctor in a perfunctory tone.

"'Do many of them go that way?'

"'Yes, when they strike the furnaces for the first time. This man was too old—over fifty, I should say—and should never have been taken on,' and the doctor glanced reprovingly at Hunter.

"'He begged so hard,' interrupted the second engineer, 'I let him on. We are short of men, too, on account of the strike.' He spoke as if in defense of his Chief. 'Didn't look to me to be so old till he caved in. Shall I make a box for him, sir?' and he turned to Hunter.

"'Yes, and paint it.'

"The Chief slipped his arm through mine, led me to a seat on the sofa beside his desk, and continued:

"'He came aboard the day before we left New York. It was about seven o'clock at night, and I had changed my clothes and was going uptown to the theatre. I stood at the end of the gangplank for a minute looking up the dock, pretty clean of freight by that time, and this man came creeping down along the side of the ship looking about him in a way I didn't like. As he got nearer he stopped under a dock light, fumbled in his pocket and brought out a letter. He wasn't ten feet from me, and so I could see his face. He read it two or three times over, turning the leaves, and then he slipped it back into his pocket again and looked up at the ship's side—then he saw me and came straight for me.

"'I must go home,' he said. 'Can you take me on?'

"'What at?' I got a look into his eyes then, and saw he was no thief—seemed more like a carpenter or a bricklayer.

"'Anything you can give me.'

"'Stoking?'

"'Yes, if there's nothing else.'

"'Then the second engineer came down the gangplank and I turned the man over to him and went uptown. When I heard he was to be buried I sent for you just as I had promised.'

"I had talked with Hunter about a burial at sea, for it was one of the contrasts I had been waiting for. They had occurred often enough in my many crossings, but I, like the other passengers, was never informed—such sights are not proper on our side of the wall.

"'What else did he say to you?' This question I addressed to the second engineer.

"'Nothin'. I put him on—we ought to have six or eight more, but we couldn't get 'em—short now.'

"'Did you find the letter?'

"'No, Doctor did. He's got it. He read it.'

"'What did it say?'

"'Well, near as I can remember, something about his coming home—a woman wrote it. He'll tell you when he comes back.'

"'I'd like to see where he worked.' I was stretching the crack, peering into the next room, finding out how they lived and what on—all the things you should let alone—not being my business and the man being beyond hope.

"'Take him down,' said Hunter, 'and show him the furnaces. Here, better peel off that coat and slip on my overalls and this jacket.' And he handed me the garments from a rack behind his door. 'Greasy down there—and look out for those ladders—they're almighty slippery when you ain't accustomed to 'em.'

"'This way, sir,' said the second engineer.

"We made our way along a flat, iron ledge—a grating, really, beneath which lunged huge pistons of steel—down vertical ladders into a cavern reeking with the smell of hot steam and dripping oil. All about were stars of electric light illumining the darkness, out of which stood strange shapes—a canebrake of steel rods; huge sawed-off roots of pillar-blocks; enormous cylinders rising up like giant trees from out a jungle of tangled steel. At the bottom of this morass a great boa-constrictor of a shaft, smooth-skinned, glistening, turning lazily in its bed of grimy water, its head and tail lost in the gloom. Beyond, along a narrow path, a low open door leading to the mouth of Hell. Here were men stripped to the waist, the sweat from their reeking bodies making flesh-colored channels down their blackened skins. Some were shielding their faces from the blistering heat as they wrenched apart the fusing fires with long steel bars; others dashed into the mouths of a hungry furnace shovelfuls of coal, blinding the light for an instant, the white sulphurous breath pouring from its blazing nostrils. On one side, before the row of hot-mouthed beasts, opened a smaller cavern, its air choked with fine black dust; still other men shoveled here, filling iron barrows which they trundled out to more half-naked men before the scorching furnaces. A new gang now joined the group: men with clean faces and hands, and half-scoured backs and breasts. This new gang had had a wash and four hours sleep in an air fouled by dust and dead steam. At sight of them the old workers dropped their bars and shovels, disappeared through the door by which we had entered, and rolled into bunks racked up one above the other like coffins in a catacomb.

"On one side of the door through which the new gang entered was an inscription in chalk. The leader of the gang stopped and examined it carefully.

"'Clean stringers inside pocket,' the record said.

"The stringers were the cross-beams tying the ship together about which the coal was packed; the pocket was one of the ship's bins. These instructions showed which death-pit was to be worked first.

"The engineer made no explanatory remarks as I looked about. It was all there before me. The man with the letter had stood where these men stood; blistered by the same heat; befouled with the same grime; half strangled with the same coal dust; had eaten his meals; drank his coffee; staggered to his

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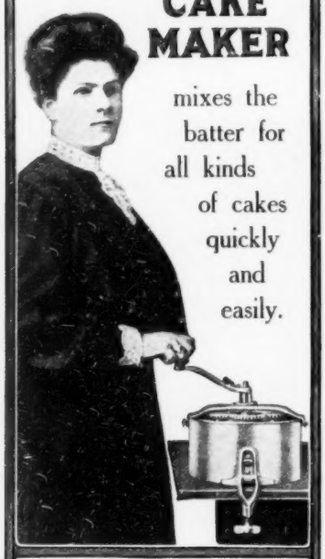

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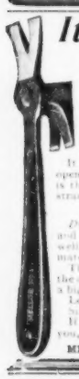

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bunk; been carried insensible to the small square room on the deck above, laid on a cot, and was now dead, and to be buried at midnight—that was all!

"Up the ladder again to a room the size of a stateroom with the berths out. Inside on a plank resting on two supports lay the crude, roughly hewn outline of a man wrapped in canvas, a flattened hump showing the feet and a round mass the head. Past this open door men walked carrying kettles of soup for the steerage. Outside in the corridor were heard sounds of hammering—the box was being made ready.

"Up a third ladder to Hunter's room. I stopped long enough to replace my coat and wash the grime from my hands, and then sought the deck.

"She was still in her steamer-chair, the roses in her lap. Not a cloud dimmed the sky; a soft, fresh, sweet air blew from the moonlit sea; the pathway of silver was still clear; souls could go to God straight up that ladder without missing a step, so bright was it. From the crowded deck came the sound of voices; some low and muffled, others breaking out into song and laughter.

"'Where have you been? What did the engineer want? Tell me, please. Something had happened; I saw it in your face. Was any one ill?'

"'He was—he is better now,' and my eye traveled the pathway of silver.

"'Oh, I am so sorry! Will you see him again?'

"'Yes, at twelve.'

"'Tell me about it. Can I help?'

"'No!'

"'Is any one with him—any one he loves?'

"'No—he is quite alone.'

"'Poor, poor fellow! Give him these, please.' And she laid the roses in my hand.

"Some hours later the messenger again tapped me on the shoulder.

"'All ready, sir, Mr. Hunter says.'

"On the lower deck, close to the sea—a deck slashed with racing waves in a storm, were grouped a body of sailors and officers—all had their coats and caps on. Against the wall of the ship stood the captain, an open book in his hand. Above his head flared an electric bulb set in a ship's reflector, marking the high light in the composition. Beneath him, almost under the book, which cast a shadow like the out-stretched wings of a bird, lay a black box—straight-sided and flat-topped. I edged my way through the crowd and stood nearer, the roses in my hand.

"The words now fell clear and strong from the captain's lips, every man uncovering his head.

"'Man that is born of woman——'

"I reached down to lay the flowers on the lid, loose, as she had given them to me.

"Hunter tapped me on the arm. He was grave and dignified, and I thought his voice trembled as he spoke.

"'Better twist a bit of tarred marlin round 'em, sir,' he whispered; 'he'll lose 'em if you don't. Hand me a piece'—this to a sailor. 'That's it, sir—a little tighter—so!'

"'He cometh up and is cut down like a flower——'

"I bent over and laid the roses on the box. The men pressed closer to look. Roses, on a man like him!

"Again the captain's reverent tones rang out:

"'We therefore commit his body to the deep——'

"Two sailors stooped down and raised one end of the box. There came a grating sound, a splash, and the highway of silver was broken into steps of light.

"The captain closed his book, the crowd opening to let him pass; the crew went back to their tasks, the sailor with tarred marlin to finish the bight of the cable he was splicing; the men to their furnaces; Hunter to his desk; I to where the girl reclined in her chair. She recognized my step and half raised herself toward me as if eager to catch my first word.

"'Did he like the roses?' she asked, her voice full of tenderness.

"'Yes.'

"'Where did you put them? By his bedside?'

"'No, on his breast.'

"'Poor fellow, I'm so sorry for him! Did you tell him I sent them?'

"'He knows.'

"'What did he say?'

"'Nothing—but he will some day.'

"Her eyes widened.

"'When? Where?'

"'In Heaven.'

"The eyelids relaxed again and a smile lighted up her face. She saw now that I was not in earnest. Then a sudden thought possessed her.

"'What is his name?' The inquiry came quick and sharp and with an anxious tone as if she felt that she had been remiss in not asking before.

"'He has none—not aboard ship.'

"'Has no name? Why, I never heard of such a thing! How very strange!'

"'No, not among stokers—stokers never have any names. This one was called "Number Seven."'"

Mac stopped and leaned toward the fire; his head in his hands, the fingers covering the eyes. Not once during the narrative had he looked at me. He had been speaking like one in a trance, or as one speaks to himself when alone. That I had been present was of no moment—I was no more than the portraits and studies on the walls—not so much as the andirons and the fire. That I had listened in complete silence was what pleased him. This, I think, is one reason why he so often unburdens his heart to me.

Mac straightened his back, rose to his feet and took a turn around the room, restlessly, as if the tale had stirred other memories which he was trying to banish; then he dropped again into his chair.

"That's what I mean by the other side of the brick wall, old man. Makes your blood boil, doesn't it? Did mine."

"And the girl in the chair never knew the truth?"

"No—and never will. He did—he looked back as he mounted the silver steps and pointed her out to the angel helping him up the ladder. God knew what he had suffered, and wiped out whatever there was against him."

There was a tone now in Mac's voice that thrilled me. For a moment I did not trust myself to speak.

"And about the letter—did you read it?"

"Yes, it was from his wife. The doctor gave it to me and I hunted her up. Little place outside of London where they made bricks. Only two rooms—in one a half-starved daughter white as chalk. She had sent for him, the wife said. Same old story—told a hundred times a day if you will but listen with your ears to some wall: the steerage out to New York—the landing in a strange city—the weary, hungry hunt for work; money gone, clothes gone, strength gone—then the inevitable. This one had made one last effort, even to giving his body to be burned. The white-faced daughter wanted to know, of course, all about it—they all want to know—but I didn't tell her—I lied! I said he had had heart failure and that they had buried him at sea and in a coffin like any other passenger, because we were only three days out; and I described the service and the roses, and how sorry the passengers were. She knows the truth now. *He's told her.*

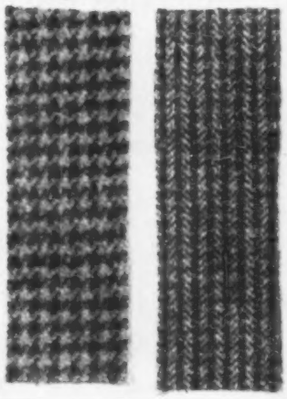
"Go get your rose, old man. I ought to have had better sense than to have raked it all up. No use in it. Not your side of the wall, not mine. Let me smell it—— Yes, same perfume. Here, put it back in your buttonhole."

A Question of Time

T. P. SHONTS, the president of the Clover Leaf Railroad and the new chairman of the Panama Canal Commission, has, like railroad men in general, made it a rule to be on time, but he slipped up recently when he came to Washington to receive his appointment on the canal board and to thank the President for the honor conferred upon him.

The President invited Mr. Shonts and his friend and sponsor, Paul Morton, Secretary of the Navy, to lunch with him at half-past one. Mr. Shonts spent the time before that hour at the Metropolitan Club, while Mr. Morton dispatched business at the Navy Department. At a quarter after one Mr. Morton telephoned to Mr. Shonts at the club that it was time to step across to the White House, and was reassured by Mr. Shonts that he would be on hand all right. But at twenty minutes to two, the chairman not having appeared, Mr. Morton became desperate, jumped into a cab and drove rapidly over to the club, where he found the Canal Commissioner renewing his old friendships. Upon being reminded by the excited Secretary of the Navy that the two had been due at the White House for luncheon at one-thirty and that it was then one-forty-five, the Commissioner calmly replied: "Oh, no; we have a half-hour yet!"—and produced his watch as proof of his statement.

He was carrying Western time!



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FARMING CLAMS

These Mollusks Require Little Care, and a Farm of Them is Sometimes Worth $2000 an Acre

By RENÉ BACHE

THE clam has at last secured a long-sought recognition as an agricultural product. It is being subjected to systematic cultivation, and is farmed as if it were a vegetable instead of an animal, the areas planted being seeded and dug like beds of turnips or potatoes. But the best way to plant seed clams, as ascertained by the Rhode Island Fish Commission, is to sow them broadcast over the surface of the ground, like oats, not even a preliminary scratching of the soil being required.

Hitherto clams have been a wild crop, and along the New England coast, where they are a very important item of food supply, they have been dug so recklessly that in some districts extermination is threatened. It is the "long," or "soft," clam that is here referred to—a bivalve most popular in all that part of the country, especially as a contribution to the open-air feasts known as clambakes. In Narragansett Bay alone there are ten thousand acres of clam beds, the local industry employing about a thousand fishermen. But the depletion of the hitherto productive areas has become so alarming that measures are being taken to encourage propagation by planting.

To propagate the clam artificially would involve no serious difficulties, the eggs being taken with a glass pipette from the "ripe" female and fertilized in a dish of sea-water; but this is quite unnecessary, inasmuch as unlimited numbers of the baby mollusks may be obtained by digging in suitable places, a single shovelful of sand sometimes yielding as many as six or eight thousand of them. These tiny bivalves are separated from the sand by the aid of a sieve, and then it only remains to sow them in the manner above described, at an hour when the tide is coming in. As soon as they are covered by the water they will promptly burrow and plant themselves.

In early summer the water is literally swarming with newly-hatched clams, which, at that stage of their being, are free-swimmers, all of them looking anxiously for places in which to settle and establish themselves. It has been found practicable to collect any quantity of them by the employment of bottomless wooden boxes, sunk firmly into the sand, and covered with galvanized wire net. When the tide flows over the box the swimming clams make their way through the net into the receptacle, but cannot get out again. The Rhode Island Fish Commission people caught as many as fifteen thousand in one batch in a clam-catcher of this kind only a foot square.

Such boxes would furnish an indefinite amount of seed, the little clams being transferred to places where they could conveniently settle down and burrow; but it is believed that all requirements can be fully met by the digging and sifting process. It has been ascertained, moreover, that the fresh-dug seed clams preserve their vitality best if kept out of water, in wet seaweed; but it is important that they shall be planted within forty-eight hours, because, if held for a longer period, they tend to lose their burrowing power.

In one of the experiments made by Dr. A. D. Mead, of the Rhode Island Fish Commission, a pint and a half of seed clams (about two thousand in number) were sown on a box of sand which was suspended eighteen inches below the surface of the water at Wickford, in a tidal current. Everybody has heard of the

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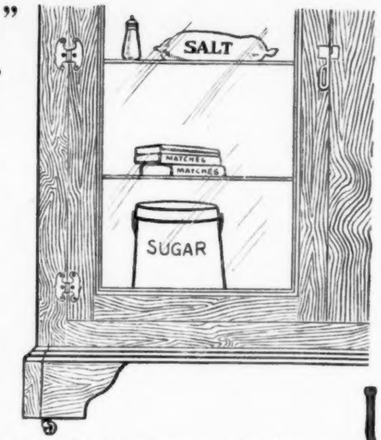

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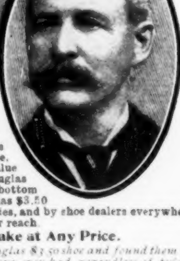

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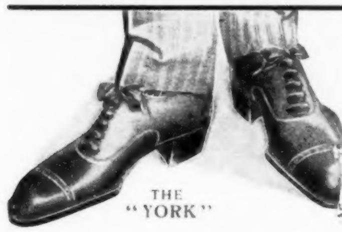

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happiness of a clam at high water, and it may be taken for granted that these specimens found life most enjoyable. It was high tide with them for twenty-four hours every day, and they were able to feed all the time on the rich soup, filled with all sorts of animalcules, which bathed them.

During the spawning season, which covers the latter part of May and all of June, the female clam throws out an immense number of extremely minute eggs, which are fertilized in the water. The young, when hatched, are barely visible to the naked eye, but any quantity of them may be collected between June 1 and July 15 by dragging a tow-net of silk bolting-cloth along the surface of the water. Thus gathered, they will be mixed with many other small organisms, but they are easily separated from the latter by gently tapping the dish of sea-water which contains them. When this is done the little clams will instantly close their shells and sink to the bottom of the vessel. Then the top water may be drawn off, with the organisms in it, and clear water may be added.

Doctor Mead says that, watching them under a microscope, the observer every now and then sees one of them open its bivalve shell (which even at this early stage it possesses), thrust out and expand a circular swimming organ, and go whirling about through the water. Then, suddenly, it draws in the organ, closes its shell, and falls to the bottom. In a state of nature the baby mollusks often swim for a week or two; then they lose the swimming organ, the syphon-like snout develops, and the larva assumes the adult form.

The free-swimming period ends late in June or early in July. If the eel-grass and seaweed are carefully examined at this time large numbers of little clams are found hanging to the stalks by slender gelatinous threads. They attach themselves, also, to driftwood, stones, etc. The animal is able at will to free itself from the attachment, and anchor itself elsewhere. When it burrows in the sand it uses the threadlike "byssus" for fastening itself to sand grains, thus making its position secure. But even then it is apt to be restless, and sometimes when as much as an inch and a half in length it will leave its burrow, for no apparent reason, and wander.

This mollusk has many enemies besides man. In the free-swimming stage it is the prey of the oyster, barnacle, mussel, and other creatures which depend for their food upon microscopic forms. After it has settled down ducks and starfish seek to devour it, and the predaceous rock-crab and sea-snail sometimes dig it even out of the depths of its burrow. For its own food it relies upon diatoms and other minute organisms, of which the water in the ocean shallows is full.

The experts of the Rhode Island Fish Commission have found it practicable to ascertain the exact rate of growth of clams by adopting the simple expedient of notching with a knife the edge of the shell. Inasmuch as the notch remains always perfectly distinct and at its original distance from the hinge (the growth of the shell being by the addition of material along its edge), it is possible to ascertain, when a clam is dug up, exactly how much it has gained in size since last examined, while the notch identifies it with certainty as a specimen that has been planted. The shell being marked with a series of growth-rings, the complete outline of the clam as it was when notched can be distinguished.

Two objects are held in view by the experts engaged in this investigation. One of them is to restore the vanishing supply of clams over the areas used as public diggings. The other is to encourage the cultivation of the mollusks on grounds leased for the purpose from the State by private individuals. There is no question that the clam can be profitably farmed, enormous crops being obtainable when simple and intelligent methods are employed. In fact, the bivalves can be made to grow in suitable localities so thick as to be almost a solid mass, and a productive sand-bank may yield a revenue that would be creditable for a gold mine—the only serious difficulty with which the enterprising clam farmer has to contend being depredations by poachers, who, if they get a chance, will ruthlessly invade and demolish his plantation.

The success achieved in this line of experimentation is mainly due to Dr. A. D. Mead, of the Rhode Island Fish Commission, and is only surpassed in importance by the work of the same distinguished scientist in behalf of the lobster, which he alone has succeeded in rearing in captivity from the egg to maturity.

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The Star Monthly wants names and addresses of bright boys between 12 and 20 years of age. We want to get them interested in our illustrated magazine for boys, which has a circulation of over **150,000** each issue. Every issue contains Fascinating Boy Stories, handsome illustrations, departments of Amateur Photography, Stamps, Coins, Curios, Puzzles, Jokes, Games, Physical Culture, etc., and each month awards a large number of valuable prizes to subscribers. **If you are not a subscriber,** and will send us FIVE boys' names and addresses plainly written, and five 2-cent stamps, or 10 cents in silver, we will enter you as a subscriber fully paid for 6 months in advance. Address

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Ask the best dealers for Corliss-Coon collars. They have them or can get any style you desire in our make. If you are not willingly supplied send your order to us with retail price, (2 for 25c) stating style and size desired. Quarter Sizes. Write for the book, "Better Collars." It shows the styles and tells why better collars.

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fit perfectly, hug the limb comfortably without binding, never let go of the hose, never tear them, last longest, look neatest—are best garters.

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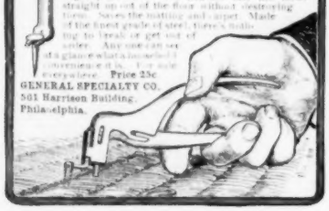

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GENERAL SPECIALTY CO.
501 Harrison Building,
Philadelphia.

The Love Letters of Plupy Shute

BY HENRY A. SHUTE

Author of Sequil, or Things Whitch Aint Finished in the First

Copyright, 1905, by Henry A. Shute

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

DEAR MARY: i was sorry you wore your net today. i dont think a net is as prety as your hair. ennyway you look so mutch pretier than the other girls that it dont make mutch diference. aint that tree a good place to put letters in. i have put a shuger heart in this letter with a peace of blew ribbon on it whitch says you are the queen of my heart. you are two. i have been thinking what i shall do when i am a man. i wanted to be a bandman but i gess i will be a geweler becaus i can then give you waches and dimonds and rubbies and perls and gold clocks. Then agen gewelers has lots of chink and can have troting horses and evrything and go to danses and to the beach summers and wair a white vest and long legged boots and lavender britches and a velvet coat and a beever hat and carry a cane or a horse whip with a ivory handel and meershum pipe with silver trimmings. when i am a geweler i am going to have 2 white horses and a buggy and dress jest like that and you shall have a blew silk dress and crokay slippers and a beeded dolman and a long white fether in your hat and a wach and chane. i am going to ask father tonite if i can leeve school and go to wirk.

Wright soon and tell me what you think of it. Yours very respectively,

HARRY.

p. s. it will be prety tuff not to see you enny more in school.

Yours very respectively, HARRY.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: i asked father last nite if i cood go into Dave Quimbys store to wirk and lern to be a geweler and he said i had better lern to split up my kindlins before i went to wirk for ennybody else. he said if i wanted to wirk they was enuf to do at home but i said i wanted to be a geweler and ern some money and he said i dident know enuf to be a geweler. he said he thougt i wood make a harness maker and i cood go to wirk for old Kellog and he gessed after i had got a strap worn out on me i wood be glad to go to school.

i dident dass to tell him what i wanted to go to wirk for. that is jest like him. he wont ever let me stop going to school. i think it is meen. why dident you say you liked me in your last letter. you have said it in most evry letter before. you do, dont you.

Yours very respectively, HARRY.

p. s. i have left a stick of creem candy in the tree. Yours very respectively,

HARRY.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: i thougt you wasent going with enny other feller. i see you walking with Billy Swett yesterday and i was mad. was that the reason why you dident wright. perhaps you think becaus Billy Swetts father is a doctor and lives in a big house down town that he is a better feller than i am. Billy Swett had better look out. You had better look out two. i had bought 2 cornballs and a peace of rock candy for you but if you spend all your time going with Billy Swett and not wrighting me i am going to eat it all.

Yours very respectively,

HARRY SHUTE.

p. s. i shall keep it over tomorow to see if i get a letter.

Yours very respectively,

HARRY SHUTE.

p. s. a 2nd time. i cood tell you something about Billy Swett if i was meen enuf. i gess you woodent want to go with him if you knew.

Yours very respectively,

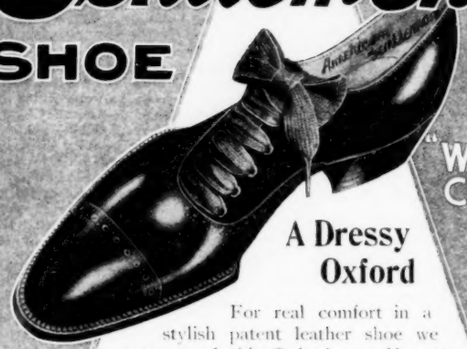
HARRY SHUTE.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: i got your letter all rite. of course you have to be polite to fellers only you needent go walking with them all the time. i wish you woodent wright my name Harrie. i never see a feller whitch wrote the end of his name ie whitch cood fite. if you

Editor's Note—This is the concluding installment of The Love Letters of Plupy Shute.

American Gentleman SHOE



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Of the mountain resorts of the Allegheny range may be specially mentioned **Deer Park, Mountain Lake Park and Oakland**, on the very top of the mountains. **Bedford Springs** in Pennsylvania; **Berkeley and Webster Springs** in West Virginia; **Capon and Orkney Springs** in Virginia, and **French Lick and West Baden Springs** in Indiana. All of these resorts are easy of access by virtue of the through vestibuled train service of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.

Atlantic City, Cape May and Ocean City and all seashore resorts are included.

During the summer months greatly reduced fares are named to the following cities account of various meetings:

ASBURY PARK, N. J.—National Educational Association, July 3-7.

BALTIMORE, M. D.—Society Christian Endeavor, July 5-10.

BUFFALO, N. Y.—Grand Lodge, B. P. O. E., July 11-15.

DENVER, COL.—Epworth League, July 5-9.

DENVER, COL.—G. A. R. Encampment, September 4-7.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.—Gymnastic Union and Festival, June 21-25.

LOS ANGELES, CAL.—Knights of Columbus, June 5-12.

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y.—Mystic Shrine, Imperial Council, June 20-21.

PHILADELPHIA, PA.—Sovereign Grand Lodge, I. O. O. F., September 16-23.

PORTLAND, ORE.—Lewis & Clark Centennial Exposition, June 1-October 15.

SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.—Boards and Missions of Christian Church, August 17-24.

For detailed information, illustrated folders, time tables, rates, etc., call on or address any Ticket Agent, Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, or

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Do you want to Control the Sales in your locality of Something that all these men can't afford to be without?

For Something that Pays its own Cost in One Year?

Then become Local Agent for the Oliver Typewriter.

And you can make at least $300.00 a year.

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You will be Welcomed by Good People who will want to Buy—who will see it is to their Interest to Buy the Oliver—for it saves them Money. Briefly—

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Is Best Typewriter in the World.

It has ½ the Number of Parts the ordinary typewriter has, therefore has ½ the opportunity to get out of repair—it writes more easily—more surely—more clearly than any other typewriter.

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Only do not hesitate—Write today for we may not be able to give you exclusive territory if you leave off writing until tomorrow.

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know enny feller whitch spells his name Willie or Jamie or Jonnie whitch amount to ennything i shood like to see them. i bet i cood lick enny one of them with 1 hand tide behine my back. perhaps they is better fellers and can wair red necktis and blew ribons in there hat. i know you dont like that kind of fellers becaus girls most always like fellers whitch can fite and i can fite terrible. i gess you have never see me mad. how did you like your creem candy. you dident say ennything about it in your letter. i dont think you wright as good letters as you did at ferst. you aint mad with me for nothing are you.

Wright soon and tell me you aint mad.

Yours very respectively, HARRY.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: why havent you sent me enny mottos laitly. if you havent got enny you mite write me what a motto says in your letter. i wood like it jest as well. i have been by your house lots of times and you havent come to the window but 2 times. has ennybody been telling lies about me. if they have you needent beleive enny of them. you dont ack as you usted to. this morning in school i hemmed to you till i thougt old Francis wood catch me and put me in the woodbox and you woodent look. i see you chewing some gum in school yesterday. did Billy Swett give it to you. i dont think you are fair to me. i know somthing is the matter. i wood like to know what it is. i have spent every cent i cood ern bying you things and you dont treet me desent. i dident sleep hardly enny last nite. i kep thinking what if i shood die wood ennybody be sorry. i have got mad with Beany and Pewt and most of the fellers and now you ack as if you was mad with me. i think you are making a mistake. here i am giving up being a bandman jest for you and am going to be a geweler jest so i can give you evrything and gewelry and other things and a pair of white horses and crokay slippers and a gold mounted harness and ice creem evry day. You wont get such things if you go with Beany, for Beany is going to be a stable keeper and he will have to run a hack to the depot and fite for passingers jest like Mager Blake and Charles Tolz and clean of his horses and he will smell of the stable all time and you cant get enny chanse to ride becaus the horses has got to be let. then Pewt says he is going to be a painter and he will keep falling of of ladders and steeples and will be brougt home all pudding and Billy Swett is going to be a doctor and he will be cutting peeple up rite in the parler enny time, and they will be hollering terrible. so you had better stick to me for i am all rite. i send you 2 mottos in this letter and i have left some figs in the tree.

Wright me as soon as you get this and tell me if you like me. i shall wurry until i get your letter and then i shall wurry more if it aint a good letter.

Yours very respectively, HARRY.

p. s. those figs were some new ones that jest come. i got them in old Tom Conners.

Yours very respectively, HARRY.

p. s. a 2nd time. Beany wood have et them himself.

p. s. a 3rd time. and so wood Pewt and Billy Swett.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: your letter made me feal a little better but it wasent as good as some of them. i read it over 5 times. ever sence Pewt and Beany found out about the other tree i havent had so good letters from you. if you are afrade some body will find your letters you can put the letters in the postofice. i send you a 3 cent stamp for if you put it in the postofice i will pay for the stamps. i had ruther you wood put them in the tree for it is more fun to get them. it is almost as good fun as birds egging and evry time i go to the tree i feal jest like i do when i find a birds nest and am climing the tree to see if they is enny eggs in it. it wood be more fun only when i dont get enny letter i am disapointed terrible and when they aint enny eggs i dont care so mutch. when i go to the tree i feal nervuser and nervuser and when i reech in and find one i feal jest as if i had found a dolar and when i dont get one i feal jest as if i had lost 2 dolars. i have been saving my money for a long time to by you somthing. i have got most enuf but not quite. i wood take it out of my cornet money but aunt Sarah keeps that and i dont dass to ask her for she wood make me tell what i wanted it for. i wood had enuf before this but i have spent all i cood spair for mottos and candy and figs. i send you a motto and i have put a cornball in the tree. i gess you will be glad when you

MAC'S $10,000 HOBBY

"Mac" was discouraged. There was no doubt about that. In spite of his efforts to keep a stiff upper lip, it was plain to the "boys" at the little club where "Mac" and his friends were wont to meet of evenings, that things were not coming his way. So after "Mac" had failed for several nights in succession to appear at the club, his friends decided it was time to see what was up. A couple of them dropped around at his home one evening after supper. The result of their call was thus reported to the club an hour or two later: "Mac was glad to see us, but he says he's got to cut out the club for a while. He's going to school." At this there were sundry exclamations of incredulity. "You're joking us," was the expression of one that voiced the conviction of all.

"Well," said the first speaker, as soon as he got a chance to go on, "he's not exactly going to school; but it's the same thing, the school is coming to him. At any rate he's got a lot of books and things, and when he ain't reading the books, he's doing queer sums on paper. What made him blue, he told us, was because he hadn't enough school-learning to get a better-paying job. He's getting the learning now and he expects when he's got that to get the job."

The boys knew "Mac" well enough to know that when he started out to do a thing he generally did it, so they did not try to dissuade him. As one of them phrased it, "*It's only a hobby of Mac's.*"

Neil MacIntosh had a good deal to make up in the study line. He had quit his books without regret after a "schooling" consisting of three terms of three months each, and gone to sea before the mast when still a boy. After a few years' knocking around the world, he was so glad to get back to New York alive that he still speaks of his return as if it were a joy of yesterday. The rest of his remarkable story is best told in his own words as he gave it recently to a meeting in New York composed of clerks, mechanics, and workers of all kinds who wanted a way pointed out to better their lot in life.

"When I landed in New York," said MacIntosh, "I got a position at a dollar a day, and after six years my salary was only ten dollars a week. It was about this time that I began to realize my lack of education. I decided that I ought to learn a trade, and so I went to work in a carriage factory in Columbus, Ohio. After about four years I came back to New York and was employed by the New York Steam Company as machinist's helper at eleven dollars a week. My next employment was with the Edison Company at twelve dollars a week. When I was advanced to the place of steam fitter with two dollars a week more I had gone as high as I could there. I saw that the reason I was thrown around from one job to another, with no certainty of a living wage, was my lack of education. I had a very slim knowledge of arithmetic, and although I studied from some books which I bought, I gave it up as hopeless. I had some books, too, on steam engineering, but I couldn't make much out of them.

"One day I heard of the success of the International Correspondence Schools of Scranton in helping men like myself to qualify for better positions. As I was then 35 years of age, it seemed a little late in life to try to learn anything new, but I thought it would cost nothing to write and ask them what they could do for me.

"They made the way so plain and easy that I decided to try it and see if they could do as well for me as they had done for others in similar circumstances.

"After studying one hour every night for a year I made application for a third class license as engineer. Such had been my progress that I had no trouble in getting it. Another year of study, and I was granted a second class license. During the first year I was employed as third assistant engineer. The second year I was promoted to second assistant, while the third year I was appointed chief engineer, having gotten my first class license during that year. In three years I had had three promotions and my salary had increased nearly one hundred per cent. Knowing as I did, that by another means could this rapid advancement have been secured, I felt pretty well satisfied with what the I. C. S. had done for me.

"I stayed with the Edison Company until the opportunity came to secure the position of constructing engineer with the Block Light & Power Company. I supervised the putting in of the light and power plants in the Grand Hotel and in one of the large department stores. This work led to the position of chief engineer at the Hotel Marlborough at a salary of $1,800 a year. Six years in this position brings me up to the time I went into business for myself. Last year my gross income was about $50,000, out of which I netted $10,000.

"It was in the course of my service at the Marlborough that I got the idea, which the knowledge imparted to me by the I. C. S. enabled me to perfect, and which has brought me success. I designed an iron combination arch and feed water heater, and it was put under one of our boilers for a test. Since then, I have secured a patent on this water arch, and have put it in several of the municipal buildings in New York City.

"In designing this arch, the Drafting Course of the I. C. S. was invaluable to me. I never could have accomplished it without the knowledge I got from the Correspondence Schools in Machine Design, Strength of Materials and Applied Mechanics. The best investment I ever made or ever expect to make was the pittance that I paid for my instruction from the I. C. S."

Neil W. MacIntosh is to-day a prosperous Mechanical engineer with offices at 54 John Street, New York, advanced from a steam fitter's weekly wage of $14.00 to a business of his own, commanding a net income of $10,000.00 a year. This is what the I. C. S. has done for *him*—it will cost you nothing to learn what it can do for *you*.

We can qualify you, in your spare time, for a more profitable occupation, or better pay in your present position. But we must first know your aim and ambition. To make it easy for you we give here a list of the best and most profitable positions. Designate by a mark the one you prefer, cut out the coupon and mail it to us. While it places *you under no obligation whatever*, it gives you the opportunity to achieve the success that has come to thousands of others by the same means.

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Illustrator	Archit'l Draughtsman
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836 Main St., Richmond, Va.

get my present. Wright me a good letter this time. Yours very respectively,
HARRY.

p. s. you cood never gess what that present is. Yours very respectively,
HARRY.

p. s. a 2nd time. it is the best one yet.
Yours very respectively, HARRY.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: your last letter was the best you have wrote for a long time. i had wurred most to deth over it. i dont beleive you know how mutch i had wurred. You never had to wurry about my letters becaus i always wrote the best ones i cood ecept 1 or 2 when i thougt you was going with some other feller. then i got kind of mad and wrote things that i hadent augt to have wrote, but that was only becaus i was mad and a feller never meens ennything he says when he is mad. that is why fellers is different from girls. girls always meen things they say when they get mad and fellers dont. jest as soon as fellers get over their mad they dont ever remember what they said but girls do. i send you a picture whitch i drew of you today in school. this is the pretiest one i ever drew out it isent as prety as you. not nearly.
Yours very respectively,
HARRY.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: i was glad to get your letter. last nite i bougt your present. it cost a grate deel of money. it is a eligant braselet, a coral braselet. i have been saving for it for a long time. i hoap you will like it. if i had 100 braselets i wood give you evry one.
Yours very respectively, HARRY.

p.s. i hoap you will like it.
Yours very respectively, HARRY.

p. s. a 2nd time. i have been saving for it a long time. Yours very respectively,
HARRY.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Dear Mary: i dont know what you meen. i put that braselet in the tree jest as i said i did. i know it dident fall on the ground. i put it way in. sombody has stole it. who do you supose done it. i had been saving for it so long. it was the best one i ever see. i will find out. Yours very respectively,
HARRY.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

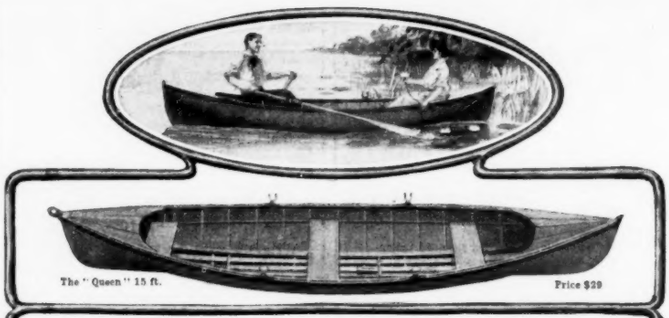
Dear Mary: i never got such a letter in my life. for you to say such a thing. honest and hoap to die and cross my throte, i put that braselet in the tree jest as i wrote you. if you dont beleive i ever bougt it you jest go down to Polly Colkets store and ask her. for you to call me meen after all i have did for you. i have gave you juju paist and goozberrys and corn balls and shuger hearts and creem candy and figs and a brest pin and a ring and mottos and i have got mad with most of the fellers i usted to go with and now you call me meen and think i am a lier becaus sombody has stole that braselet. some fellers has killed themselfs for things like that. you will be sorry for this when i am ded.
Yours very respectively,
HARRY SHUTE.

p. s. it will be two lait then.
Yours very respectively,
HARRY SHUTE.

EXETER, NEW HAMSHIRE, ——, 186—.

Miss—i shall never wright or speek to you agen. no body can call me a lier 2 times and be frends. now i will tell you this. i dident lie when i said i give you that braselet. you can beleive it or not. i supose you will keep my brest pin and ring, girls most always do. ennyway i send you back your old hair ring. i dont want it. i dont want those figs and juju paist and cornballs and mottos and creem candy and things. a girl whitch will treet a feller as meen as you have treeted me will do ennything. some girls do different. i know one. she hasent got red hair eether.
Yours very respectively,
HARRY SHUTE.

p. s. or frekles.
Yours very respectively,
HARRY SHUTE.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The Memoirs of an American

(Continued from Page 11)

Carmichael seemed to be in a specially bad temper this morning. When he went to New York he was accustomed to enjoy himself, and it was not the right time to badger a man who was just off the cars. Pretty soon John said fiercely:

"It's my business to look after such matters?"

Mr. Dround nodded.

"Don't I do it satisfactorily?"

Mr. Dround waved this aside.

"Well, I guess you'll have to be content with that."

"Mr. Carmichael!" — the senior member leaped to his feet — "you forget yourself! You will be good enough to answer me yes or no, to my direct question. Did you or did you not pay money for this privilege?"

Carmichael's voice shook as he replied:

"See here, Dround! If you don't know your own business enough to know the answer I don't see why I should tell you." His temper was going with every word he said. "But if you want to know, you shall! There hasn't been such a thing as a private switch-track put down in this city since you began doing business for less than $7000. I paid the right people $9500 for ours. There you've got it! Now, what are you going to do about it?"

The big Irishman plumped his two red fists on Mr. Dround's desk and glared at him. At that moment I pitied the old gentleman heartily: he was never born to do business, at least in our day. He seemed to shrivel up under Carmichael's words.

"How, may I ask," he said at last in a low tone, "was this done without my knowledge? How does it appear on the books?"

Carmichael laughed at the simple question.

"Charity! We are a very charitable concern!"

Mr. Dround's lips trembled, and he cried out rather than spoke:

"No, never! Better to fail! Better to go bankrupt at once!"

He was talking to himself. Then he recollected us and said with dignity:

"That is all, Mr. Carmichael. After this I shall attend to all such matters myself. Good-morning, gentlemen."

He sat down at his desk, dismissing us. Carmichael was shaking with anger.

"No!" he cried, "that isn't all! Turn me out of your office like a boy, with my orders! When it's me that have stood between you and ruin any day these ten years. What would your business be worth if it weren't for John Carmichael? Ask Harrington here. Go out and ask your bank ——"

"I don't believe we need to discuss this ——" Mr. Dround interrupted.

"Yes, we will! Get somebody else to do your dirty business for you. For, let me tell you right here, Henry I. Dround, that I don't go broke with you, not for all your smooth talk and virtuous principles."

Mr. Dround pointed to the door. He was trembling again. I took the big Irishman by the arm and led him from the office. Outside the door he shook me off, and hurled himself into his own office.

That was the first wind of the storm, and the rest wasn't long in coming. Somebody told me that Carmichael had been seen with one of Strauss' lieutenants going into a law office that did some of the big packer's work. It seemed natural enough to me that Carmichael should quit our company, but I was sorry for what must come. Meantime, Mr. Dround was more assiduous at business than I had ever known him to be. He came early, and instead of driving over to his club for luncheon took a bite in his office, and put in the afternoons going into all departments of the business.

In the end, the trouble came to a head in this way. In company with every large shipper at that period we made our bargain with the roads: no large firm, and no railroad, pretended to live up to the law in the matter of rates. The roads sold their transportation, as we sold ribs and lard — for the highest figure they could get. Before any considerable contract was entered into the thrifty shipper saw to his rate in advance. And some time later there came along from the railroad that got the business a check in the way of "adjustment." The senior member, in his new energy, discovered one of these rebates. He sent it back to the traffic manager of the road with a letter such as the roads were not in the habit of getting from their favored shippers. The second vice-president

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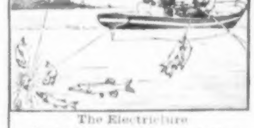

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References: Any Bank in Sturgis.

and general traffic manager of that line attended the same church the Drounds went to, and the president of the road, also, was one of Dround's friends. I wonder what they thought when their attention was called to this little matter!

Carmichael told me what had happened with a wicked grin on his face:

"Righteous man, Henry I. Dround, all right! D——n good business man, too," he commented. "What do you think is going to happen to us? He's chucked away the profits of that contract!"

"You aren't planning to stay, John?" I remarked casually.

He looked at me and laughed.

"Do you want to come with me when I get out?"

I smiled. This time there was no open row between Mr. Dround and the junior member of the firm. But a few weeks later Mr. Dround told me what I already knew—that he and Carmichael were about to part. I advised him bluntly to make it up with the Irishman if he could—not to part with him at any cost.

"For, Mr. Dround, you will find him fighting on the other side: Strauss has him."

He knew as well as I what that meant to his business, but he said with new determination:

"Mr. Carmichael and I can never do business together again."

Then he suddenly offered to take me into partnership on the same basis that Carmichael had. I suppose he expected me to jump at my chance, but the prospect was not altogether inviting.

"I ought to say, Mr. Dround," I replied hesitatingly, "that I think Carmichael was right in this rebate business, and in the other matter, too. If I had been in his place I should have done the same thing—any man would. It's against human nature to sit still and be eaten alive!"

Mr. Dround's eyes lowered, and he turned his face away from me. His spirit was somewhat daunted: perhaps he began to realize what it meant to stand out alone against the commercial system of the age. Nevertheless, he said some things, perfectly true, about the honor and integrity of his firm. As it had been handed over to him by his father, so he would keep it, please God.

"That's all right," I said impatiently. "That might do in times gone by. But Carmichael and I have got to live in the present. That means a fight with any club you can lay your hand on. I would like to stay on and fight it out with you. But I can't see the use, on that basis. Look!"

I pointed out of his window to a new refrigerator building that Strauss was putting up under our noses.

"That is only one: you know the others. He is growing every day. You can't expect us to sit here twiddling our thumbs and thinking of our virtue while he gets the business! Better to sell out to Strauss right here and now, while there is something to sell."

"Never!" Mr. Dround cried with unaccustomed vehemence. "Never to him!"

"Well, then, we've got our work cut out for us, and let us waste no more time talking about the morality of rebates and the rest of it."

"Yet that horrid scandal about the switch-track," he resumed in his old weak way. "Nothing has done so much to hurt my position in the city as that."

"But what are you going to do about it?" I asked in Carmichael's very words. "Those thieves over there in the council hold you up. What good does it do the public for you to refuse their price? It's like paying for the right to put up a house on your own lot—it's tough, but you had better pay and get your house."

"Mr. Harrington, I refuse to believe that in our country an honorable business cannot be conducted successfully by honorable methods."

"That depends on what you choose to call honorable methods. At any rate," I concluded in disgust, "you are likely to have a good chance to try that proposition to the bitter end, unless you take my advice and sell to your chief competitor."

He waved this aside impatiently.

"Well, then, look for the fight of your life to survive, not to make money. I tell you, Mr. Dround, Strauss is out there waiting to eat us all up. And you have thrown him your general for a beginning."

"But I trust that I have another as good, or better," he said with his usual courtesy.

We had some more talk, he urging me to stay with him, although I let him see plainly where I stood on the matter of rebates, private agreements, and all the rest of the underground machinery of business.

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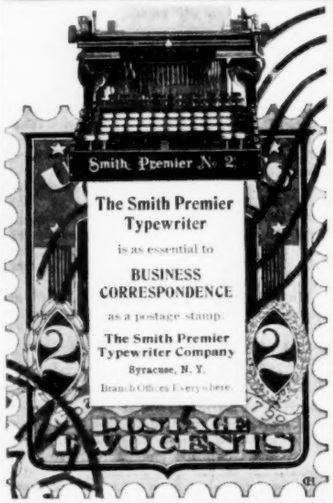

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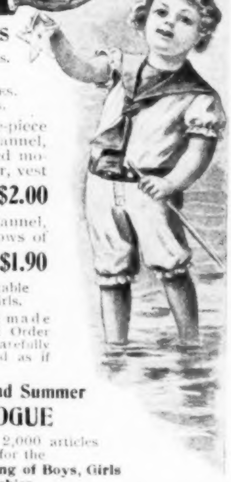

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"If I take your offer," I said at last, "I shall use the old weapons—you must know that. There are no morals in business that I recognize except those that are written on the statute-book. It is dog eat dog, Mr. Dround, and I, at least, don't propose to be the dog that's eaten."

Even then he did not stop urging me, salving his conscience by saying: "It saddens me to hear as young a man as you take that cynical view. It is a strange time we are coming to. I pray it may not be a worse time for the country!"

To my mind, there was something childish in the use of those words, "better" and "worse." Every age is a new one, and to live in any age you have got to have the fingers and toes necessary for that age. The forces which lie in us and make those triumph who do triumph in the struggle were sown in us from the beginning of time. There's little use in trying to stop their sweep, or to sit and cry like Dround by the roadside, because you don't like the game. For my part, I went with the forces that are, willingly, gladly, believing in them no matter how ugly they might look. So history reads: the men who work to a purpose accept the conditions of their day. And the others follow along just the same; while the world works and changes and makes itself over according to its destiny.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Disarming the Prickly Pear

IT IS only a few years since ranch-owners in Texas were anxiously seeking a means which could be employed for ridding the pastures of a worthless and injurious weed, the "prickly pear," which it was feared would overrun large areas. To-day the loss of this once-despised plant would be regarded as a calamity, owing to the discovery of its value as food for cattle, sheep and hogs. It furnishes an admirable emergency ration for stock during the long dry spells which at intervals threaten ruin to the cattlemen and sheep-raisers in the arid region, and its usefulness as a succulent feed for increasing the milk production of cows is notable.

In Southern Texas the prickly pear is so abundant, and grass is so scarce during part of the year, that the stock-raising industry may be said to be almost dependent upon the plant for existence. The prickles are disposed of by steaming the plant in a boiler-tank, or by chopping it into small pieces, spines and all, or by burning the spines off with the blast-flame of a gasoline torch. Cattle and sheep are extremely fond of this kind of forage, which has saved many a herd and flock in famine years. The Department of Agriculture is of the opinion that the prickly pear, if judiciously planted, would render useful enormous areas which now are valueless. Already, though it grows so luxuriantly as a weed, a few plantations of it have been started, the method adopted being exceedingly simple. All that is necessary is to cut up the plant into joints and scatter them on the ground, whereupon each joint takes root and proceeds to grow.

Various species of cacti furnish the main food of millions of people in countries about the Mediterranean during one or more months of every year, and some of these have been introduced from the Old World into Northern Mexico and our own Southwest, where, for example, it is common to find gigantic forms of the prickly pear, fifteen or twenty feet in height, in the neighborhood of the ancient missions and on the larger ranches. The fruits are so highly prized by the Italians that there is a limited market for them in the cities of this country at the present time, the requisite supply being brought from Italy and sold for about the same price as oranges, bulk for bulk. Some species yield valuable drugs.

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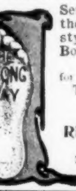

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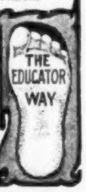

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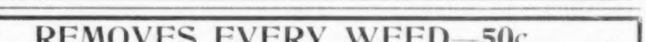

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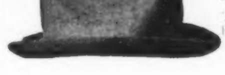

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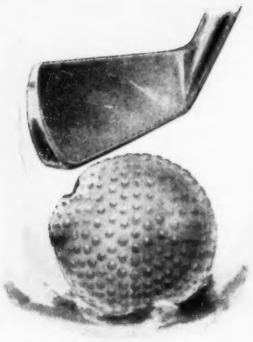

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The Picnickers

(Continued from Page 9)

"How can I," Doctor Towley demanded irritably, "if I don't remember it?"

"How, indeed?" I mused gently.

Presently he rose and expanded his chest handsomely. "Now, being somewhat refreshed, I think I shall return to the city. Oh, I shall not trouble you to start now! Instead, I shall walk to a near-by railway station and make the trip by train. Good-day, and may I ask you to—— Thank you, really a pleasant cigarette when one cannot—ah, will you say good-by to the ladies for me?"

Willie and I sat in a sort of stupor, looking at the departing guest.

"Well, I'll be—— Wouldn't that *jolt* you?" marveled Willie.

"It did. My, I wish I had his nerve!"

"It ought to be killed," Willie grunted. "The loafer!"

"What makes me sorest about that person is he succeeded in making me feel exactly as if I had given this picnic myself. I'll never forgive him for that."

Anne poked her head through the bushes above us and beckoned to me mysteriously.

"She says nothing will induce her to ride back in the boat with him," Anne whispered darkly.

"Effie?"

"Of course."

"Well, nothing will have to. He's gone."

"*Gone?*"

"Gone."

"*Gone?*"

"You talk like an auction, dear. Gone."

"In a boat?"

"No. He walked. He said he felt refreshed, and he left his good-by for the ladies. That's about all he left—he smoked all my cigarettes."

"The rude beast! . . . Maude, he's *gone? Effie?*"

It became evident at once that some one must row Effie home in the smaller boat. Willie and I retired and soberly cast lots. It was "Heads," and he got Effie. "You needn't act so nasty about it," said I. "You ought to be glad. Rowing the big boat alone is far more fatiguing than rowing Effie."

"Well, I'm sure I hope the wind hasn't changed," said Maude critically as we embarked.

I eyed her with curiosity. "Why?"

"Why? Oh, it helped us so coming up, you know."

I sighed. "Yes, but we are going back—at least I hope so."

"Of course we are—that's the point," explained Maude. "What does he mean, Anne? Is it a joke?"

"It *is* a joke," said I. "The wind hasn't changed—can't you see it?"

"Then why——" began Maude, mystified.

"Don't listen to him, dear," put in Anne. "He's just fooling."

"Oh," said Maude coldly.

I shall never forget that row—or you can use it with its other pronunciation, if you like. Maude fixed her eyes on me with nervous intentness from the start, after waving what seemed to be a last farewell to Willie. Anne sat bolt upright and grasped the boat with both hands—she's terribly afraid of the water and me together. The wind had increased, so it seemed, to a regular monsoon, and in accordance with Maude's fervent wish remained unchanged from morning. It was dead against us. As the day waned the sky grayed over and a horrid chill struck into our bones. It was, as Anne had said, the reward of wisdom to wear our thin clothes.

I bent to the oars like a sapling in the breeze—and accomplished just about as much. The fragments of the feast in four hampers acted as ballast; Anne and Maude were the lady crew, and I was the galley slave.

"We don't seem to be going ahead much," remarked Maude reproachfully.

I wasted breath enough to answer blightingly: "I am not an eight-oared crew, you know, in a shell."

"Oh! I thought you *said* you were on your 'Varsity eleven," said Maude.

"I didn't."

"I think I'll row, too, dear," suggested Anne presently. "It might help."

"It might." The words lacked conviction. She took the other pair of oars. "Maude, you steer," said Anne.

"How do you steer, Anne?"

"Oh, just pull the little ropes to and fro—it's perfectly simple."

"What makes it so hard?" gasped Anne a minute later. I kept silence. I had to.

"Why don't you keep *time, step*—whatever you call it—with *me?*"

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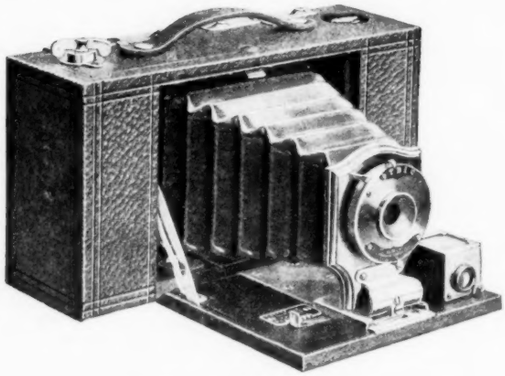

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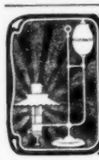

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GILBERT MFG. CO., 16 Elm St., Rochester, N. Y.

"Oh, how it hurts my hands!"

"Oh, did I *spatter* you, Maude?"

"Is it *easier* now, dear, with me helping?"

"Why don't you *say* something?"

"*Maude!* you're taking us right *across* the lake!"

Maude accommodatingly jerked the other tiller rope. We slewed around heavily in the water.

"Mercy!" cried Maude, "what made you do that?" She pulled again on the ropes. The ensuing change of direction bewildered Anne: she lost her right oar. We couldn't get it again. "Never mind," she gasped; "I'll paddle with this one. Keep on *steering*, Maude."

We had proceeded some two hundred yards from our starting-place. My hands were beginning to blister and my back ached frightfully.

"I'm almost frozen to death," complained Maude at intervals.

"Take the oar and paddle then," advised Anne.

"I wouldn't *do* it for a *fortune!* We might upset. Haven't we almost got there?"

We staggered on. You've seen charts on which were plotted the course of the football during a game. Well, compared to ours those courses were beautiful straight lines. My hands blistered, broke, and blistered again. It grew dark and cheerless, the lake stretching out like a sheet of india-rubber. Maude continued to steer—when she thought of it. We rowed piratically from one side of the lake to the other. I was too tired to protest. Anne slapped the water with tortuous zeal. She was fairly wringing wet. My best white shirt hung on me, a most draggled sight. Maude vowed she'd caught an awful cold; I hoped she had.

Some time—years—after, we snubbed the boat's nose dolefully against the profane owner's float. He met us with genial words.

"Well, ye made a day of it, didn't ye? Guess it seems darn good to you city folks to git out and git the kinks out'n yer spine, eh? Had a *good time*, didn't ye? Ye look it."

I wish now I had pushed him off his float as I wanted to do then. Instead, I paid him; I hate to say how much.

"She's a good, light, little boat," he remarked affably.

"She may be virtuous, as you say," I answered with candor. "But the next time I ride in a sea-going tug I'll get one that goes by steam and not by hand-power."

Willie and Effie were waiting in the trolley station. It was eight o'clock at night. We had had no food. There was no place to buy anything but lemonade. We sat about, shivering. After waiting for half an hour I went out and found a surly man and questioned him.

"I ain't no time-table," he answered contemptuously, "am I?"

"I don't know," said I wearily. "I don't seem to extract any more information out of you than I do out of the ordinary time-table. Maybe you are one."

"See here, sport, don't you get funny!"

"Were you ever on a picnic?" said I.

"That's my business."

"Well, it's a bad business—give it up. I was about to say that if you ever had been on a picnic, and had been mercifully spared by a kind Providence to return to civilization again, you would recognize the folly of telling a man in that condition not to be *funny*."

He edged away suspiciously.

"Bug-house!" I heard him mutter. "Say, sport, this car ain't going to the foolish-house," he called back.

"Thanks," said I, "I was afraid it might."

"Say, you want the hurry-up wagon, you do—and, say, the power's give out—that's why we ain't goin'."

"The power's give out," I confided shortly to the others on my return.

"What a pity," Effie began brightly, "that we haven't any cards; we might play euchre."

Willie and I went out silently into the night.

We got home at midnight. I wrapped up my hands in bandages; Anne took a headache tablet and put cold cream on her flaming nose.

"Well?" said I tentatively.

"Oh, well," said Anne, "we're home, at any rate. . . . Poor Effie!"

We grinned at each other kindly.

"God tempers the picnic to the shorn lamb—poor Effie!" I remarked thoughtfully.

"Let's have our next picnic"—Anne spoke ingratiatingly—"with just us two."

"Right here in our own dining-room, Anne?"

She nodded sleepily.

"After all," said I as we thrust the incriminating signs of the picnic out of sight, "Effie is more to be pitied than blamed."

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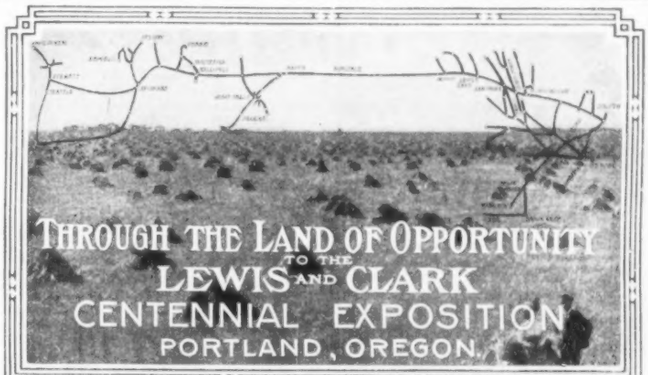

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Literary Folk Their Ways and Their Work

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¶ How profound an influence the daily newspaper has upon contemporary life may be increasingly seen by any attentive reader of contemporary letters. Let him only take the trouble to note what magazine stories and what novels of the day spring from a news suggestion. Such a story or such a novel has what in the editorial offices they call "timeliness."

Publicity has made names so real to us, or at least has etched so thoroughly on our memories the portraits that pass for reality, that in almost any piece of writing which attempts to deal with modern actuality one detects the familiar second-hand likenesses of Mr. Morgan, Mr. Armour, Mr. Rockefeller, Mr. Lawson, President McKinley, Secretary Hay, Senator Aldrich, or whoever may typify the force of the moment. And so on down the gallery; wherever one walks the reporter and the photographer have passed that way before. When David Graham Phillips wrote The Cost it would not have been possible to identify John Dumont with John Gates, but it was perfectly clear that the story of Dumont's raid on Great Lakes and Gulf had its hint in Gates' raid on Louisville and Nashville, and that Fanning Smith of the novel was August Belmont of the newspapers. The Cost was a Wall Street story, and The Plum Tree, by David Graham Phillips *(The Bobbs-Merrill Company)*, is a political story. Accordingly we have hints in Senator Saylor of Senator Aldrich and of Senator Hanna, in Scatborough of Senator Beveridge, in Burbank of McKinley, in Judge Simpson of Judge Parker, in Goodrich of Gorman. Simpson is a minor character and Judge Parker is a defeated candidate. Neither of them matters much, and a handful of Horace Greeley whiskers is disguise enough for the "candidate for the interests," the "shy, ultra conservative, his brains spun full in every cell with cobwebs of legal technicality." But Burbank is a different case. He has to be treated more carefully, for McKinley had the misfortune to be shot, and there are still to be hunted out lithographs of his portrait banded in black with that of Lincoln, "Our Martyred Presidents" in bold-faced type beneath. Clearly Burbank must be manipulated more delicately. So after building up the likeness with accurate care—the rise to Governor, the friendship with a powerful Senator, and that Senator chairman of the National Committee, the Presidential pose, the campaign of dignified calm, all the externalities that made the man recognizable—it becomes necessary to caricature the likeness and to distort the character lest offense be given. The result is a baffling and blind sense of irritation—a confusion of motives at cross purposes. Once the identification is fixed, the mind refuses to subordinate what has become fact to the demands of fiction. With the historical novel, whatever its faults, no such cramping hindrance obtained. King James was what he was, and the more lifelike he could be painted the better he took his place in a picture of the times, but nobody yet is at all certain what President McKinley was, and there can be as yet no assured handling of his personality for purposes of fiction. The safest thing is to do as Mr. Phillips does—make use of certain of his characteristics and others of his career, then disguise his character and befool his life. It will not be consistent, but neither can it be made actionable.

Such are the inevitable defects of a literary method which cannot be true to the facts and dares not be frank with the reader. They constitute a real impediment to complete enjoyment of a powerful piece of work. Mr. Phillips is a good craftsman and never writes a dull story. He never commits an offense against the intelligence, and, did space permit, tribute on tribute might be paid his political sagacity, his discriminating analysis of motives, his manipulation of plot, and his always accurate and often happy use of language; but through it all one wonders, had Mill or Macaulay condescended to fiction, if the result would not have been kindred. The style and the embodiment of the thought are the style and construction of the moral essayist cutting cameos and polishing truths, not of the natural-born creator of living character working freely in a plastic medium.

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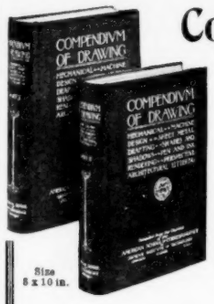

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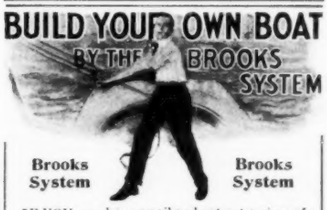

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APHRODITE

(Concluded from Page 5)

Iole," she whispered, "Iole, Iole, Iole! There is danger, as you say — there is, and I understand it . . . now. . . . But I love him so — I — I have been so happy — so happy! Tell me what I have done. . . ."

"Done, child! What have you done, in God's name?"

"Loved him — in the names of all the gods! Oh, Iole! Iole! Iole!"

. . . . . .

"——The thrush singing in darkness; the voice of spring calling, calling me to his arms! Oh, Iole, Iole! — these, and my soul and his, alone under the pagan moon! alone, save for the old gods whispering in the dusk ——"

. . . . . .

"——And listening, I heard the feathery tattoo of wings close by — the wings of Eros all aquiver like a soft moth trembling ere it flies! Peril divine! I understood it then. And, stirring in darkness, sweet as the melody of unseen streams, I heard the old gods laughing. . . . *Then* I knew."

. . . . . .

"Is that all, little sister?"

"Almost all."

"What more?"

. . . . . .

And when, at length, the trembling tale was told, Iole caught her in her white arms, looked at her steadily, then kissed her.

"If he is all you say — this miracle — I — I think I can make them understand," she whispered. "Where is he?"

"D-downstairs — at b-bay! Hark! You can hear George swearing!"

In the silence from the drawing-room below came the solid sobs of the poet:

"P-pup! P-p-penniless pup!"

"He *must* not say that!" cried Aphrodite fiercely. "Can't you make father and George understand that we have nearly seven hundred dollars in the bank!"

"I will try," said Iole tenderly.

And with one arm around Aphrodite she descended the great stairway, where, on the lower landing, immensely interested, sat Chlorippe, Philodice and Dione, observant, fairly aquiver with intelligence.

"Oh, that young man is catching it!" remarked Dione, looking up as Iole passed, her arm close around her sister's waist. "George has said 'dammit' seven times and father is rocking — not in a rocking-chair — just rocking and expressing his inmost thoughts. And Mr. Briggs pretends to scowl and mutters: 'Hook him over the ropes, George. 'E ain't got no friends!' Take a peep, Iole."

But Iole brushed by her younger sisters, Aphrodite close beside her, and, entering the great receiving-hall, stood still, her clear eyes focused upon her husband's back.

"George!"

Mr. Wayne stiffened and wheeled; Mr. Briggs sidled hastily toward the doorway, crabwise; the poet choked back the word, "Phup!" and gazed at his tall daughter with apprehension and protruding lips.

"Iole," began Wayne, "this is no place for you! Aphrodite! let that fellow alone!"

Iole turned, following with calm eyes the progress of her sister toward a tall young man who stood by the window, a red flush staining his strained face.

The tense muscles in jaw and cheek relaxed as Aphrodite laid one hand on his arm; the poet, whose pursed lips were overloaded, expelled a passionate "Phupp!" and the young man's eyes narrowed again at the shot.

Then silence lengthened to a waiting menace, and even the three sisters on the stairs succumbed to the oppressive stillness. And all the while Iole stood like a white Greek goddess under the glory of her hair, looking full into the eyes of the tall stranger.

A minute passed; a glimmer dawned to a smile and trembled in the azure of Iole's eyes; she slowly lifted her arms, white hands outstretched, looking steadily at the stranger.

He came, tense, erect; Iole's cool hands dropped in his. And, turning with a light on her face that almost blinded him, she said, low laughing: "Do you not understand? Aphrodite brings us the rarest gift in the world in this tall young brother! Look! Touch him! We have never seen his like before for all the wisdom of wise years. For he is one of few — and men are many, and artists legion — this honorable miracle, this sane and wholesome wonder! this trinity, Lover, Artist and Man!"

And, turning again, she looked him wistfully, wonderingly, in the eyes.

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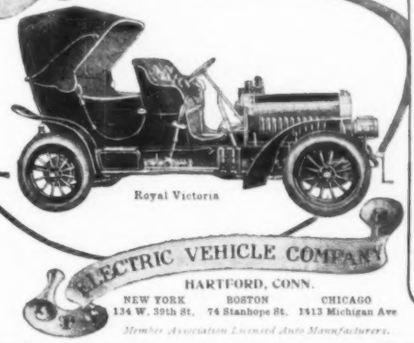

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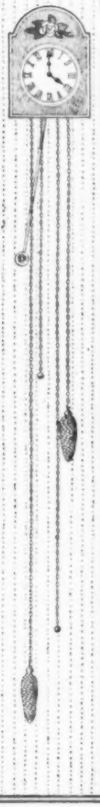

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The Sunday-School Picnic

(Concluded from Page 7)

You both have been obliged to kneel—expanding, as it were, from your sitting posture. And now the feast is done. Vainly you view the débris; you have accomplished marvels, but you can do no more. You sigh, and, sucking an orange, reluctantly you stand. You waddle off, feeling fat and stuffy, to convene with the other boys, and compare notes.

"Aw, you ought to been at *our* table!" claims Billy Lunt. "We had chocolate cake with chocolate an inch thick—didn't we, Buck?"

"Buck" promptly assents.

"So'd we! So'd we!" retorts Hen. "An' we had jelly-cake, an'——"

"So'd we!" inform rivals, bound to uphold the honors of their boards. "An' lemon pie——"

"An' custard, an'——"

"An' pickled peaches——"

"Golly! I'm 'bout busted!" chuckles Billy complacently.

Standing companionably by, Snoopie harkens and grins, but says little. Only from a bulging pocket he extracts another orange and drills into it. One may be certain that *he*, at least, has missed nothing.

Prudence might dictate a period of quiescence as a tribute to digestion. But the day is short, and a half a bun skimming into your midst—that is, into the midst of the group, not into your own midst, where it would have hard work to find lodgment—arouses you to retaliation. Back and forth and across fly the remnants from the various tablecloths, and applause greets every hit. Snoopie introduces a popular feature by plastering against a tree-trunk a fragment of a custard pie. Forthwith custard and lemon pie are at a premium, these being the kinds that stick. Then, interrupting the pleasant pastime, charge upon your ranks horrified witnesses, suddenly awakening to the crisis.

"Boys! Stop it! Stop it at once! The idea!"

Expostulating, they drive you all, shamefaced but sniggering, from the premises. You leave the plot looking as though a caisson laden with cartridges of lunch had exploded there!

The principal event of the day being over, your elders relax into a state more or less lethargic. The women sit and crochet and chat. The minister goes to sleep with a handkerchief on his face, and even some of your juniors follow suit—members of the infant class seeking the pillow of their mothers' laps. The Bible-class wanders off in couples. The superintendent, only, is kept active by demands of "Swing me, Mr. Jones; please swing me!" from the little girls.

Naturally, the inspiration for you and yours is to follow the Bible-class couples and spy upon them; when they think themselves nicely secluded and comfortably ensconced, to steal upon them; and in the midst of their innocent confidences to hoot upon them (with such delicate insinuations as "Aw, Mr. Johnson's Miss Saxby's beau!"—or "Say, Miss Lossing, Mr. Pugsley wants to kiss you!")—and then to flee, riotously giggling.

It is four o'clock. Prolonged shouts from the throats of the superintendent and assistants echo through the woods, calling together the stragglers. The 'buses have arrived. Homegoing must be accomplished early, on account of the "little ones."

All right. If the day is done, another day is coming. You rush down, and you and Hen again secure the end seats. The 'bus fills, its load, on the whole, not so sprightly, or enthusiastic, or clean as in the morning.

Snoopie hangs on at the rear.

The driver says "Gid-dap!" Somebody replies with "Whoa!" "Whoa-oa!" supplement a score of voices. To frantic encouragement descends the hill, scurrying as if from Indians or bears, a belated, last Bible-class couple.

"Gid-dap!" once more urges the driver.

The 'bus moves. You yawn. Hen yawns. You are tired and sticky. Hen, also, is tired and sticky.

"Lookee!" bids Snoopie.

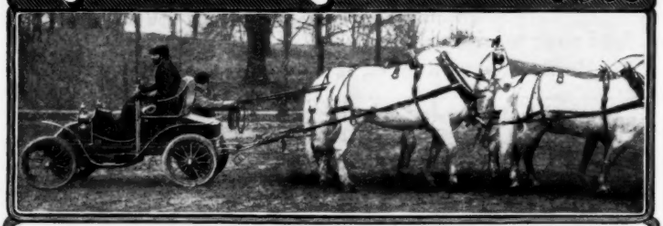
He throws away his dead snake; his pockets are empty again.

Yet in the depth of the aftermath you brighten. Your thoughts travel ahead. The Presbyterians are to have *their* picnic next week!

"You goin'?" asks Hen.

"You bet!" you reply confidently.

Autocar Runabout (Type X) $900



The Power of This Runabout

The Autocar Runabout has a motor of 10 mechanical horse-power which is about equivalent to 15 animal horse-power.

The horses, however, could furnish this power for only 8 hours a day. As the Autocar Runabout can be run for 24 hours a day, it will be seen that if both power and endurance are considered this car is equal to 45 horses.

This tremendous power coupled to a car weighing only 1200 lbs. gives the Autocar Runabout great speed and hill-climbing ability and is one of the things that make it the most remarkable small car built.

The motor in the Autocar Runabout is of the two cylinder horizontal opposed type. It is located in front under the hood, where it is instantly accessible. The transmission case may be reached by lifting the floor in front of the seat. This car has three forward speeds and reverse, and shaft drive.

Catalogue descriptive of Type X $900, Type VIII Tonneau Car $1400, and Type XI Four Cylinder, Side Entrance Tonneau Car, $2000, with dealer's name, sent free upon request.

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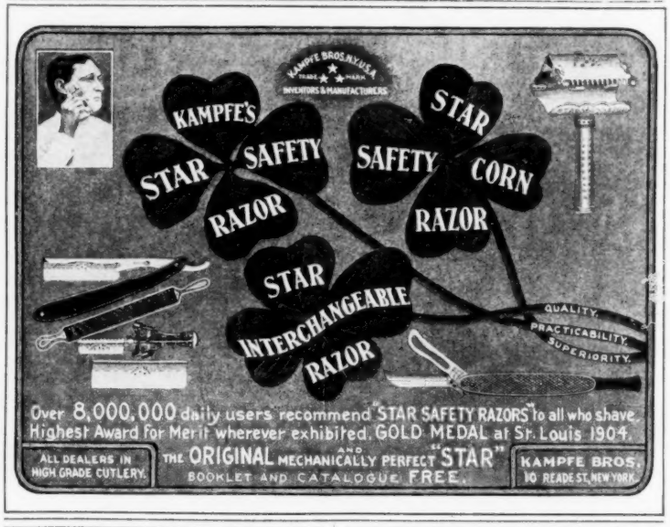

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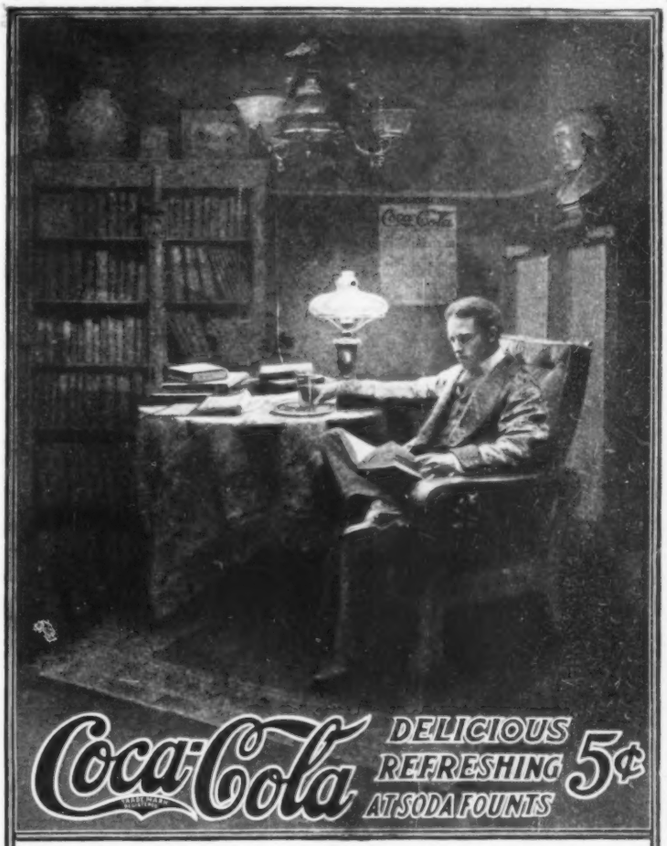

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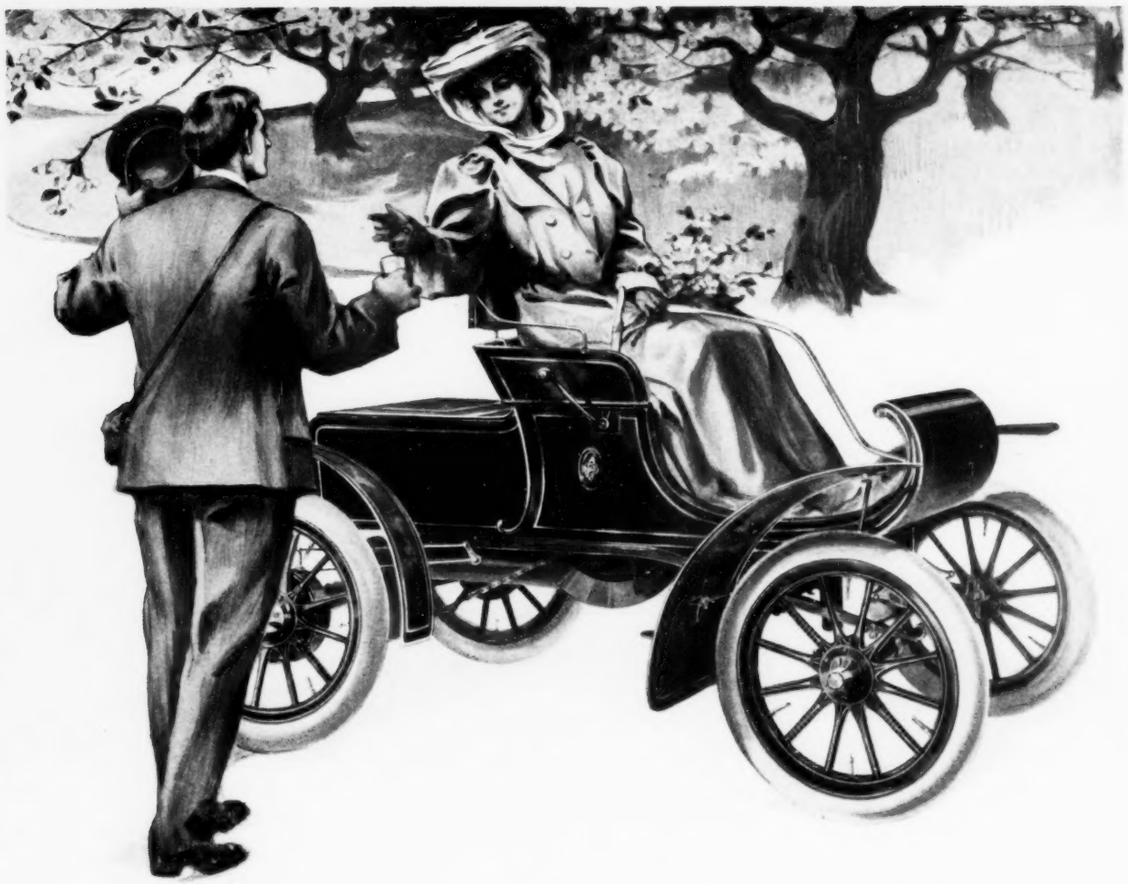

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